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INQUIRY INTO THE OPINIONS
OF THE
COMMERCIAL CLASSES
OF
GREAT BRITAIN
ON THE
SUEZ SHIP CAN

By FERDINAND DE LESSEP

LONDON,
PUBLISHED BY JOHN WEALDS, 59. HILBORN.
1857.

BRITISH OPINIONS
ON THE
ISTHMUS OF SUEZ SHIP CANAL.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—

To you, individually, I dedicate, and to the earnest consideration of your illustrious assemblies I submit, the following pages. They contain a faithful record of a series of discussions held, and resolutions adopted, in the principal cities of the United Kingdom, whose commercial and municipal bodies have in due form, and under the presidency of their elected authorities, given expression to their opinion as to the interest which the commerce and shipping of Great Britain and her colonies had in the projected Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez uniting the Mediterranean and Red Seas, and presenting, without the necessity of transhipment, a short route for merchandise to the East.

Delivered thus from all doubt as to the opinion of the merchants, shipowners, and manufacturers

of England, so competent in the matter, and being now about to pursue the execution of this undertaking, in favour of which I claim exclusively neither the protection nor the assistance of any single Government, I address myself with entire confidence, for the removal of any opposition on the part of the British Ambassador at Constantinople, to the political assemblies of a free country, which, under other circumstances, have already won the glory of setting above all considerations of personal interest, or national rivalry, the great principles of civilization and of free trade.

I remain, My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your most Obedient

and Humble Servant,

FERDINAND DE LESSEPS.

LONDON ; *June*, 1857.

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O P I N I O N S
OF THE
COURT OF EAST INDIA DIRECTORS
AND
PENINSULAR AND ORIENTAL STEAM NAVIGATION
COMPANY.

Two years ago I visited England, and in a first publication laid before the public of this country the early draught of the project for effecting a communication between the Red Sea and Mediterranean by a Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez, for the execution of which I have obtained a concession from His Highness the Viceroy of Egypt. It was my object to learn how this great undertaking would be regarded by that nation whose vast possessions in the East, and ever-increasing commercial relations with the whole world, placed her foremost among those who would be affected by the important revolution which would thence result in the conditions of trade and navigation throughout the globe. As the highest authority that could be consulted in all that concerned the interests of the British possessions in India, I submitted the results of our preliminary studies to the Court of Directors of the East India Company; and as an excellent practical guide as to the immediate consequences of

the project on the existing mercantile traffic with the East, I referred them also to the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, whose vessels already pursue, in disjointed fragments, the course it is intended to render continuous and unbroken. The expression of opinion which I solicited in both cases was freely, and at once given, and I subjoin the letters in which it was conveyed, as here fitly finding their place, at the commencement of a record which presents the collected verdict of British commercial interests on the Isthmus of Suez Canal.

“East India House, 16th August, 1855.

“SIR,—I have received and laid before the Court of Directors of the East India Company your letter dated the 7th instant, and in conveying to you their acknowledgment for your work entitled ‘The Isthmus of Suez Question,’ I am commanded to inform you with reference to the important enterprise to which it relates, that the Court must always feel a deep interest in the success of any undertaking that would facilitate the means of communication between this country and India.

“I am, Sir,

“Your most obedient, humble Servant,

“J. C. MELVILL, Secretary.”

“Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.
Offices 122, Leadenhall-street, London,
15th August, 1855.

“SIR,—I have, by order of the Directors, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated 6th inst., and to express their best thanks for the copy of

the interesting work on the Isthmus of Suez question, by which it was accompanied.

“With reference to your request to be made acquainted with the opinion of the Directors on the subject, I am desired to state, that, in the absence of more specific data, they cannot venture on prognostications as to the probable success of the scheme, or the plan proposed by you.

“The importance of the results that would attend the junction of the Mediterranean and Red Seas by a navigable canal is, however, so patent, that no second opinion can exist in the matter; and, should the project be carried to a successful issue, this company must of necessity participate in the effect it will produce not only upon the commerce of this country, but of the whole world.

“I am, Sir,

“Your most obedient Servant,

“C. W. HOWELL, Secretary.”

Encouraged by this unequivocal approbation of the advantages of the proposed undertaking if carried into execution, and noting that the practicability of the project remained still, from traditional and inveterate prejudice, subject to doubts which might act unfavourably and render less emphatic that general expression of opinion as to the benefits to be anticipated from it which it was my desire to obtain from the commercial classes of this country, I proceeded at once to set this part of the question at rest as far as human foresight, aided by the highest skill and experience, could determine. Accordingly, in the course of last year, I formed the International Scientific Commission on the Isthmus of Suez Ship Canal, constituted by the most experienced hy-

draulic engineers and nautical men that Europe could afford, and presenting, from the admixture of all nations, a tribunal the most perfectly impartial that could be formed. The ground was visited and again explored, the details of the early project reviewed under the light of the fresh material resulting from later and more extended observations and researches, and a modified plan was determined on, which is now before the public of Europe in the Report of the International Scientific Commission, whose names attached form a guarantee of its soundness and practicability, which could not easily be surpassed, and which no individual opinion can invalidate.

On my return to England this year, immediately upon the publication of this report, which now cleared and simplified the question I had to submit to the trading and shipping interests of England, I commenced a tour through the principal sea-ports and commercial centres of the three kingdoms, with a view to obtain from each an authentic expression of opinion on a subject which concerned them so nearly. My visit to each place was preceded by the issue of the following circular, announcing its object :—

*“ To the Bankers, Merchants, Shipowners, and Manufacturers
of ———.*

“ GENTLEMEN,—In inviting your attention to the condition and progress of the Suez Ship Canal scheme, I advocate not only my interest as the promoter and concessionary of that great undertaking, but the interests of all commercial communities, in the measure of their trading and industrial activity, and consequently in the highest degree those of
—————.

“By a Charter of His Highness the Viceroy of Egypt, I am empowered to carry out the necessary arrangements for a junction of the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, by a Canal navigable for the largest ships, and for the opening by this means of a safe maritime route to India, China, and Australia.

“The route which will thus be opened to commerce is shorter by 5,000 miles, as respects England, than that at present followed round the Cape of Good Hope. Its track lies through seas of all others most easy of navigation, and it skirts the coasts of countries rich in natural products, though, at present, for all mercantile purposes, beyond the reach of European enterprise.

“Engineers of the highest repute, in England and the chief countries of Europe, have examined and approved the technical features of the scheme. An important accessory work, consisting of a branch canal, is now in actual progress, and the greater part of the capital required has been subscribed among the commercial classes of the several European nations, whose Governments have readily sanctioned a project of such manifest importance to the development of commerce and civilization.

“My object in shortly coming amongst you will be to ascertain the feelings which exist in the financial and commercial classes of ——— with respect to this great enterprise, and personally to furnish full information as to its objects and details, well knowing that your countrymen yield only to the most solid arguments and after the most mature and circumspect examination.

“In the principal cities throughout Europe where this scheme has been brought forward to public notice, it has elicited on the part of the chief municipal, commercial, and scientific bodies,

manifestations of the most signal interest and sympathy. I am, therefore, naturally desirous to complete this general expression of approval with the crowning sanction of the greatest commercial and manufacturing nation in the world, who, above all others, is called to participate in the incalculable advantages inevitably resulting from a work which, by concentrating her vast colonial possessions in the East and in the South, must increase and consolidate her prosperity.

“I have the honour to subscribe,

“Gentlemen,

“Your most obedient and humble Servant,

“FERDINAND DE LESSEPS.

“LONDON, MAY, 1857.”

On the point of starting, an opportunity presented itself at the Goldsmiths Hall, to which I had been invited on my arrival in London, of inaugurating my appeal to the public opinion of England, by briefly stating, before a select and influential assembly, the position in which the project, of which I was the promoter, then stood. The reception I met with was accepted by me as a favourable augury of the eventual result of my mission. That I have not been wrong, the record which follows affords ample testimony. I subjoin a notice of the proceedings alluded to, extracted from a weekly journal :—

GOLDSMITHS HALL.

“At a dinner held on the 24th ultimo, at Goldsmiths Hall, and at which were present Mr. Gladstone, the Bishop of London, General Williams, M.P., Sir Roderick Murchison, the Right Hon. W.

E. Gladstone, M.P., Mr. Ellice, M.P., and M. de Lesseps (the projector and concessionaire of the Suez Canal), the health of the latter gentleman was proposed in an eloquent speech by Mr. Gladstone, coupling the name of M. de Lesseps with that of the Suez Canal, an undertaking with which every Englishman must sympathize.

“M. de Lesseps said, in reply—I congratulate myself, gentlemen, upon being present at this meeting of the honourable and liberal corporation which claims among its members now present the venerable Bishop of London; the hero of Kars; one of the most illustrious orators of the House of Commons; the learned geologist and geographer who conjectured the existence of the gold deposits in Australia previous to their discovery; one of the most able directors of the East India Company, and so many other distinguished individuals.

“I am extremely flattered at the kind reception you have given me; and, as I owe that reception to my position as promoter of the Suez Ship Canal, I trust you will allow me to address a few words to you on that work of universal advantage, which is progressing towards a speedy realization.

“If there are any persons who still entertain doubts as to the physical possibility of its execution, let me recommend them to read the report of the twelve engineers and naval officers who formed the International Commission, and whose competence is incontestable; and also the Memoir which has been quite recently presented to the Imperial Academy of Science of France, by a commission of that body.

“To those who might be disposed to regard the enterprise as not likely to be productive in a financial point of view, I will reply: that an undertaking is not carried out through those who do not

believe in its success, but through those who have confidence in it. And in this respect, the *bona fide* offers of capital which I have had from all sides are a guarantee for the success of the financial operation.

“As to any political motives of opposition, I believe that none are ever likely to be urged; for I would not be so unjust to the English nation as to suspect that it would cherish feelings of jealousy towards other nations, or chimerical fears of foreign competition calculated to affect their commercial and naval prosperity.

“I have, on the contrary, been happy to ascertain from my own observations, during the visits I have paid to England, that public opinion repels completely all sentiments of this kind. All the organs of the English press have unanimously proclaimed it, and the sympathy I now meet with in this numerous and select assembly, affords a fresh proof of this well-ascertained truth, that the canalization of the Isthmus of Suez, the result of which will be to bring England nearer the Indies, and extend her domain on the seas, will prove especially profitable to the interests of Great Britain—who possesses more colonies, more maritime stations, more sailors, and more ships, than any other nation in Europe.”

MEETINGS AND RESOLUTIONS.

LIVERPOOL.

PUBLIC MEETING IN THE UNDERWRITERS' ROOM.

Extract from the "Liverpool Daily Post."

On Thursday last, the 30th April, M. de Lesseps, the promulgator of the plan for throwing open the Isthmus of Suez by means of a Ship Canal, went on 'Change, and was introduced to the principal merchants by Mr. P. Rawson. M. de Lesseps was accompanied by Mr. D. A. Lange, of London, and Mr. Kenney. After the introductions had taken place, the parties adjourned to the Underwriters' Rooms, which were filled with the Merchants, Shipowners, and Bankers of the town, anxious to hear an explanation of the plan from M. de Lesseps.

Mr. P. RAWSON upon taking the chair, said, that M. Ferdinand de Lesseps having obtained from the Viceroy of Egypt a concession for the formation of a Universal Company, with the object of throwing open the Isthmus of Suez, by means of a grand Ship Canal, and the practicability of executing this undertaking having been recognised by a body of the most skilled engineers and naval officers, had expressed the desire that England should concur in the favourable opinion which had been manifested by the other nations of Europe and America as to the general utility of the undertaking. He was very sorry that M. de Lesseps was not able to express his views in English; but there was a gentleman, Mr. D. A. Lange, of London, who would convey them to the meeting on his behalf, and M. de Lesseps would answer any questions put to him, as well as express his views as to the practicability of forming the

canal, and the benefit that would result to the trading and shipping interests of the community from its construction.

Mr. LANGE said that M. de Lesseps wished him to inform the commercial classes of Liverpool that the concession which he had obtained from the Viceroy of Egypt was a most important one to them, and he wished to have the concurrence of all the nations of Europe as to the utility of the plan. The feasibility of the project had already been amply shown in a work which had been published by M. de Lesseps, who wished them perfectly to understand that he did not appear amongst them to ask for any money, but simply to elicit an opinion as to the utility of the plan, and the advantages likely to accrue to commerce in general if it were carried out. Any further explanation as to the practicability of the plan would be given if required; but that was quite foreign to the point at issue, for it had been fully settled by those who were competent to judge; and, as few present had probably been on the spot to judge for themselves, M. de Lesseps thought it would be amply sufficient to convince the meeting that every means had been taken to show that the canal was easy of execution. The most eminent engineers in England, France, Holland, and Austria had been consulted, and, having judged for themselves, had confirmed the practicability of the project. These gentlemen proceeded to Egypt in 1855 with M. de Lesseps, at the expense of the Viceroy of Egypt, and the result since published showed the practicability of the plan was beyond a doubt. Even those who, before the issuing of the report, were the most opposed to the scheme, had in no case since admitted that there could be any difficulty in its execution; and those who had gone thoroughly into the matter knew that the imagined obstacles, if any, had been removed. There were two lakes which facilitated the operations of the plan—Lake Timsah and the Bitter Lakes—the former intended to be used as a basin or harbour for ships, and as a coaling station. The concession made by the Viceroy to M. de Lesseps was to form a Universal Company to make the canal, and allowing the company to retain possession of the canal for 99 years. The Viceroy had also granted them lands in perpetuity, about 60 miles, to the point of Cairo, and these, so far as they could be irrigated, would belong to the company. These regions could be made very productive (indeed the Delta was as fruitful as Holland), the produce was rapidly increasing, and the grain grown there was shipped up the Nile to Alexandria. The object in making a branch canal from Cairo to the Lake Timsah was threefold—first, it was necessary to assist the labourers on the works—a sweet-water canal was very desirable; secondly, it would be necessary to irrigate the lands; thirdly, it was considered

an important acquisition to the main canal on account of the trade which would be carried on along its banks, and would be brought into the grand canal, and thus increase the profits of the undertaking. The land allotted to the company would also be turned into profitable use. The district would also produce pines and Indian corn; and altogether the profits would be estimated on about 250,000 acres, and would be considerable, as was stated in the works published by M. de Lesseps. There seemed to have been an impression of fear abroad in respect to the entrance of the jetty of Pelusium. In order to put aside that fear, a corvette had been placed there all the winter at the expense of the Viceroy of Egypt, and it had since been ascertained that she had not shifted her anchors in the least; that the sands were fixed firmly; and that, notwithstanding the very heavy gales that had taken place, she had not been in any more danger there than she would have been in any one of our roadsteads. The width between the two jetties would be 500 yards, and would project nearly two miles, while those of Suez would extend a mile and a-half into the sea. These piers are to be made of stone from the quarries at Attaka and from the neighbouring islands of Cyprus, Rhodes, &c. The waters into which the canal flowed were not very deep, but yet offered great facilities for the object to be attained, and there was no important difference in the elevation of the two seas, as had often been supposed. There would consequently be no sluices; the vessels would run right through; and provision had been made for tug-boats to expedite the passage through. There would be a depth of thirty-three feet of water at the end of the Pelusium jetty. The depth at the Suez jetty would be 28 feet. The canal itself was to be 26 feet deep and about 330 feet wide. There were no obstacles in the way of the construction of the canal; there were only two mounds in its course, one 50 and the other 40 feet in height, and no rock at all was to be found. It had been thought by many who had not been on the spot, and whose impressions were formed only from what they had heard, that the sand was likely to block up the canal. That was a perfect chimera. There was no moving sand at all. On the contrary, on one side of the canal the shrubs were so thick that camels with difficulty pass through them, and on the other side was gravel. Only one spot was shifting, and it would be necessary to lay it with "seed plots," as in Holland. No sands could possibly get into the lakes. The ground through which the canal was intended to pass was composed of a strata of sand and plastic clay, and then sand again; in fact, the track had been bored to a depth of 50 feet, and in no one instance had they found a different soil to what he had just mentioned, and

there could not, he thought, be a better one found for the formation of a canal. Again, M. de Lesseps wished to impress upon the merchants of Liverpool that he did not come there to ask them for money. The amount necessary had been reserved for the various countries in Europe. Egypt and Turkey £2,000,000; the Northern parts of Europe £1,000,000; Germany, Holland and Belgium £1,000,000; the United States of America, Spain, Portugal and Italy £1,000,000; France, £1,500,000; leaving over for England, in case she should choose to avail herself of the opportunity to take a share in the undertaking, £1,500,000. But if England did not choose to join the undertaking financially it would not prevent the canal from being carried into execution, because M. de Lesseps had found in all countries a desire to contribute much greater sums of money than would be required, so that it was more a question of reserving those subscriptions for the present than a difficulty in getting funds for the undertaking. Nothing had yet been done to bring the matter formally before the public as a company, and whether England joined or not in the project it would at least not be uninteresting to them to know how the canal would be made to pay. There would be, as he had just stated, a capital of £8,000,000, and if they took the interest upon that at five per cent., which was rather low at the present time—(but still the canal was not going to be commenced that day)—it would be £400,000, and the expenses of maintenance were set down at £63,000 per annum.

Now, the question was, how many vessels would be required to make the canal pay? It seemed, from a computation that had been made, that only two vessels of 2,500 tons each, paying the small tonnage rate of ten francs per ton, including towage and all other expenses, would realize £800,000.

The CHAIRMAN—You mean two ships a-day through the canal?

Mr. LANGE—Yes. It appeared that in 1856 the tonnage round the Cape was 1,177,000 tons. The increase of British shipping had been computed in the calculation at 100,000 tons annually; but he saw that day, in the City article of the *Times*, that so far from the increase being 100,000 tons for the last year, the increase had been about 120,000 tons inwards, and something like 230,000 outwards for foreign shipping alone; making an increase of 350,000 tons last year. This did not include the coasting trade, from which it appeared that there had also been an increase inwards of 90,000 tons, and outwards of 163,000 tons; showing how much more rapidly the shipping had increased in that direction than even we expected ourselves. In conclusion, M. de Lesseps would answer any questions put to him.

After a pause, Mr. SANDBACH said they had all heard with interest the statements made with reference to the canal across the Isthmus of Suez. That was not a new matter to Liverpool men, and it would readily be conceived that so important a matter in a commercial point of view would not be before the world for two years without the Liverpool public having examined it, and come to some definite opinion respecting it. There had been in the minds of some people extreme doubt as to the practicability of making the canal. Those doubts had been, he believed, resolved; at least, they did not concern that meeting at that time. They, he thought, must be of opinion that if the canal should be finished it would be of vital importance to the commerce of Great Britain—of the world. They themselves, as Liverpool merchants, were deeply interested in its success, and must wish for its accomplishment. He would, therefore, request the meeting to pass the resolution which he should move, and which was as follows:—

“It is hereby Resolved—That we, the Bankers, Merchants, and Manufacturers of Liverpool, consider that the execution of this great enterprise would be productive of the greatest advantages to the commercial and shipping interests of England, as of all other nations, and earnestly desire that the enterprise may attain, without any impediment, a speedy and successful realization.”

Mr. STEWART seconded the motion, and said that the merchants of Liverpool were much indebted to M. de Lesseps for having come amongst them to inform them upon so interesting and important a question to the town.

The motion was carried by acclamation.

Mr. S. KERR moved a vote of thanks to M. de Lesseps, for the honour he had done the merchants of the town that day.

Mr. C. S. PARKER seconded the motion, which was carried amidst applause.

Mr. LANGE said, on the part of M. de Lesseps, he had to return his sincere thanks for the attention with which the meeting had listened to the explanations which he had given, and that M. de Lesseps would always retain a very pleasant and grateful remembrance of the reception that he had that day received at their hands.

After a vote of thanks to the Chairman, the proceedings terminated.

THE EAST INDIA AND CHINA ASSOCIATION.

On leaving the Underwriters' Rooms, M. de Lesseps and his friends proceeded, by appointment, to meet the members of the East India and China Association.

A full meeting of the board was present to receive M. de Lesseps, and the chair was occupied by Mr. CHARLES TURNER, the President of the Association.

Mr. DANIEL ADOLPHUS LANGE entered into a detailed exposition of the project; at the close of which M. de Lesseps furnished a number of additional particulars, in answer to questions put to him by members of the board. The President then stated that the board would take the matter into consideration, and after a private discussion, would forward their decision in the form of a resolution to M. de Lesseps, whom he thanked on behalf of the board for the very lucid explanation of the project which they had heard.

The following is a copy of the resolution subsequently adopted by the board:—

“At a special general meeting of the Liverpool East India and China Association, held on the 29th April, 1857, to receive from M. de Lesseps an explanation of his projected scheme of uniting the Mediterranean and Red Seas, by means of a Ship Canal through the Isthmus of Suez; Charles Turner, Esq., in the chair—

“M. DE LESSEPS, having entered into the necessary explanations relative to the projected canal, and having informed the meeting that the maximum rates to be levied on shipping for its use would not exceed ten francs per register ton, including towage—

"It was Resolved—That in the opinion of this Association, the successful completion and main-tenance of the canal would prove highly advantageous to the commerce and shipping interests of the country.

"CHARLES TURNER, Chairman."

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF LIVERPOOL.

MAY 4, 1857.

The monthly meeting of the Council was held this day; JOHN TORR, Esq., the President, in the chair.

ISTHMUS OF SUEZ SHIP CANAL.

On the motion of the President.

"It was Resolved--That, without expressing an opinion as to the practicability or cost of the projected Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez, this Council considers that the completion and maintenance of such a canal would be of great benefit to the commercial interests of this country."

"JOHN TORR, President."

MANCHESTER.

THE MANCHESTER COMMERCIAL ASSOCIATION.

(From the "Manchester Guardian," May 8, 1857.)

On Wednesday a meeting of the directors of the Commercial Association of Manchester was held, for the purpose of hearing the statements of M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, in explanation of the project for making a Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez, with a view to elicit an expression of opinion on the part of that important and influential body as to the advantages which the execution of the undertaking will present to the commercial interests of England.

The President of the Association, Mr. ASPINALL TURNER, M.P., occupied the chair. M. de Lesseps, having introduced Mr. C. L. Kenney, Secretary of the Company, and Mr. Daniel Adolphus Lange, of London, to the meeting, stated that, from his want of fluency in speaking the English language, he was unable to address them himself, but that his representative, Mr. Lange, would furnish them with all the necessary information. A brief sketch of the general features of the enterprise was then given by that gentleman, bearing more especially on the commercial and financial aspects of the proposed canal. In the course of his explanations he referred to the tendency of the recent improvements in the art of ship-building to diminish the

draught of vessels, while their tonnage, in proportion, was at the same time increased. The testimony of several eminent engineers was adduced in confirmation of this statement, and especially that of Mr. Laird, of Birkenhead, the most extensive shipbuilder in Great Britain. On their high authority, Mr. Lange informed the meeting that screw vessels of 2,500 tons were now constructed, capable of superior speed to those of former models, and drawing only 20 feet of water; and it was considered that this draught would be sufficient to fulfil, in the majority of cases, all present practical requirements as regarded the merchant service in any part of the world. Facts took the same direction as regarded ships of war; formerly an 80-gun ship, of 3,000 tons, used to draw 27 feet of water; whereas a 50-gun frigate, of 3,400 tons, was now being constructed not to exceed 24 feet draught. These remarks were made to furnish an assurance that the depth intended to be given to the canal, viz., 26 feet, would always be sufficient, and there would be no necessity for subsequently increasing it. As regarded the saving of distance which would be effected in the case of vessels carrying on trade with the East, it was stated that the distance by the Cape to the island of Ceylon was 14,000 miles; while by the Suez route it was only 7,000, or exactly one-half. The calculations of the returns of the canal had been based chiefly on the steam traffic, including vessels fitted with auxiliary screws; and, as the proportion of vessels employing steam power was yearly growing more considerable, a large margin was left for future improvement on this score in the finances of the undertaking. By the Board of Trade returns it appeared that, in one year, the total tonnage of sailing vessels registered amounted to 4,000,000

tons, that of steamers being 300,000 tons ; whereas, in the same year, the total tonnage of sailing vessels constructed being 130,000, and that of steamers 64,000, an important advance in favour of steam vessels was shown. Alluding to the comparative security of the Red Sea for navigation, it was alleged that every day tended to prove that the unfavourable notions entertained in former times on this point arose from ignorance and prejudice. The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company had in the commencement, under these misapprehensions, paid large sums for insurances. This was found by experience to be superfluous, and the amount formerly set apart to cover these contingencies is now distributed among the shareholders.

At the conclusion of these explanations, questions were put by several of the members to M. de Lesseps as to certain conditions of the concession, and the rate of toll to be levied by the company.

The PRESIDENT then informed M. de Lesseps that the board considered themselves sufficiently in possession of the nature and details of the undertaking, all the explanations given having been most clear and straightforward ; and would now deliberate in private as to the resolution they had to take in reference to the subject. The resolution, which was received by M. de Lesseps in the course of the same day, is given below, with the letter by which it was accompanied :—

“ Manchester Commercial Association, 6th May, 1857.

“ Sir,—On behalf of the directors of this Association, I have the honour to convey to you the expression of their best thanks for the very interesting information so obligingly afforded them by you

this morning, relative to your project for the construction of a Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez ; and I beg further to transmit the annexed copy of a resolution unanimously passed by this board with reference thereto.

“ I have the honour to be, Sir,

“ Your most obedient Servant,

“ HUGH FLEMING, Secretary.

“ To M. F. de Lesseps.”

“ At a meeting of the board of directors of the Manchester Commercial Association, held on Wednesday, 6th May, 1857, J. Aspinall Turner, Esq., M.P., in the chair—

“ It was moved by Murray Gladstone, Esq., seconded by John Pender, Esq., and Resolved unanimously—

“ That this Association, being desirous of encouraging every movement having for its object the promotion of commerce throughout the world, has heard with much interest the statements with which the board has been favoured by M. de Lesseps, relative to a Ship Canal to connect the Mediterranean and Red Seas ; and provided that effectual means be taken to secure the neutrality of such canal, as well as a moderate rate of charge, such as shall give every possible encouragement to the transit of merchant vessels, will view with much satisfaction the realisation of so important an undertaking.

“ HUGH FLEMING, Secretary.”

(A true extract.)

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

(From the "*Manchester Daily Examiner and Times*,"
May 4, 1857.)

A deputation of the promoters of the Suez Maritime Canal Universal Company, now in course of formation, consisting of M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, minister plenipotentiary of France, to whom the concession for the construction of a Ship Canal across the isthmus has been made by the Viceroy of Egypt; Mr. Daniel Adolphus Lange, of Messrs. Lange Brothers, Mark Lane, London, commercial representative of the projected company; and Mr. Charles Kenney, provisional secretary, attended at a meeting of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce on Saturday, for the purpose of explaining the project, by which it is proposed to connect the Red Sea and Mediterranean. THOMAS BAZLEY, Esq., president of the chamber, occupied the chair. Mr. Lange entered minutely into the details of the projected works, being assisted in his explanations by plans and charts. The works contemplated are, a canal navigable by large vessels between Suez on the Red Sea and the Gulf of Pelusium on the Mediterranean; a canal of irrigation joining the Nile to the above-mentioned maritime canal; and two branches for irrigation and supply striking out of the preceding canal, and in the direction respectively of Suez and Pelusium. The Ship Canal will be 92 miles long, 26 feet deep, and for $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles its breadth will be 329 feet, and for the remainder 263 feet. At either end there will be two jetties, those at Suez measuring in length 2,500 and 2,200 yards respectively, and those at Pelusium 3,800 and 2,700 yards in length. In furtherance of the project, a concession has

been made to the projected company of immense tracts of land on both sides of the ship, irrigation, and branch canals, amounting in the aggregate to 250,000 acres. The total capital required is estimated at £8,000,000, and distributed as follows:—Turkey and Egypt, £2,000,000; North of Europe, £1,000,000; France, £1,500,000; Holland, Germany, and Belgium, £1,000,000; United States, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, £1,000,000; which left £1,500,000 to be subscribed by English merchants, should the project meet their approbation. In reply to the Chairman and others, Mr. Lange stated that the Viceroy was expending about £1,200 per month. It was estimated that the entire work would be completed in six years. Although the capital was £8,000,000, the cost of the works would be short of that by about £1,500,000, which would be expended in paying five per cent. interest on the capital advanced, before the works became productive, and in ulterior improvements necessary in order to the company reaping the full benefit from the productiveness of the land granted by the Government. The charge for passing along the canal had been fixed at a maximum of ten francs per ton. Although the canal would be chiefly available for the passage of steam vessels, sailing ships could also take advantage of it. Mr. Lange further explained that the object of the deputation was not to get money, for the capital had been mostly reserved, but to get the opinions of the commercial world on the utility of the undertaking, and the advantages it would confer on the trade and commerce of such districts as Manchester.

It was then moved by Mr. Findley, seconded by Mr. Brookes, and carried unanimously:—

“That having heard the explanations of M. de

Lesseps respecting the progress of the Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez, this board is of opinion that great advantages, both to commerce and civilisation, would be derived from the completion of the scheme, and that it is eminently deserving of the support of the commercial world."

M. DE LESSEPS, through Mr. Lange, expressed his obligation to the Chamber for the resolution just passed. It showed that the opinions of the Chambers of Commerce in England coincided with the opinions expressed in France and other countries, and showed how much France and England were the same when what was to be a benefit to the one received the support of the other.

DUBLIN.

THE DUBLIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

(From the "*Dublin Evening Post*," May 12, 1857.)

Yesterday, at nine a.m., a meeting of the Council of the Chamber of Commerce took place, to hear a statement on behalf of M. de Lesseps, the promulgator of the plan for throwing open the Isthmus of Suez by means of a Ship Canal, and thereby to unite the Red Sea with the Mediterranean.

The following members of the Council were present:—The Lord Mayor; Messrs. Thomas Crossthwait, Thomas Pim, Charles Haliday, Patrick Sweetman, J. Jameson, Alexander Parker, Alderman Moylan, Thomas Hutton, Thomas L. Kelly, Valentine O'Brien O'Connor, Joseph Boyce, W. D. La Touche, F. Codd, (Honorary Secretary,) &c.; Messrs. Waller and Dudgeon were also present.

M. de Lesseps, who was unable to express his views in English, was accompanied by Mr. D. A. Lange, of the firm of Lange, Brothers, and Co., of Mark-lane, and Mr. Charles L. Kenney, the Secretary to the company in London.

The chair was taken by THOMAS CROSSTHWAIT, Esq., President of the Council of the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. F. Codd, (Honorary Secretary,) read a letter from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, introducing M. de Lesseps

as a distinguished diplomatist, who had formerly officiated as a Minister Plenipotentiary on behalf of the French Government, and stating that the object of his present visit was to elicit from the commercial community of Dublin an expression of opinion with regard to the advantages which would be conferred upon the interests of the empire by the execution of the proposed undertaking.

Mr. D. A. LANGE was then introduced by M. de Lesseps, and proceeded to give some details upon the subject of the Suez Canal. He should begin by explaining that the object of M. de Lesseps's visit was simply to elicit from the Council an expression of opinion with regard to the utility of the undertaking of cutting the canal, the Viceroy of Egypt, when granting this concession to M. de Lesseps, having expressed a wish that he should ascertain from different countries the exact opinion entertained in reference to its usefulness. It was upon that point solely that they had sought this interview, and not with the object of proving to the Council that the thing could be accomplished, because that point had been already set at rest by the opinion expressed by a Commission, consisting of the most eminent engineers in Europe, who had gone out to the spot, and after remaining there for two or three months, agreed, upon their return, to a most decided opinion as the practicability of the undertaking. He would not enter into all the details of the plan, which had now been in agitation for a period of eighteen months. All doubts and difficulties had been removed by the report of the engineers to which he had referred; and though details were foreign to the object of their visit, the Council might nevertheless not think it uninteresting if he were to give a few explanations as to the canal itself. *(Here the speaker entered into details of the plan, which have been given in previous reports.)* The Delta was extremely fertile, as much so as some of the richest lands in Holland; portions were, of course, of an arid nature, but when irrigated were capable of becoming as fertile as the rest. The whole extent of the land given to the company, not merely upon lease but by a grant in perpetuity, was 250,000 acres, which were capable of growing indigo, cotton, and Indian corn, and might, in time, be very valuable to the company. Another very important point was that no important difference existed in the level of the two seas.

Mr. HALIDAY—Is there not a difference of three feet?

Mr. LANGE—The ancients always supposed there was a great difference between the two seas, and that by cutting open the Isthmus they would give rise to an overflow attended by very dangerous consequences; it has now, however, been ascertained beyond all doubt that there is no important difference between the level of the two seas, nor are there any obstacles to be encoun-

tered. There would be no locks, so that a vessel could sail right through from the Mediterranean to India, or to any part of the East. There would be a coaling station at Lake Timsah, which would be also used for provisioning and victualling purposes; and the objects of the sweet-water canal from Cairo to Timsah would be threefold—first, to enable the labours at the works to be carried on; secondly, it would be necessary for irrigating the land; and thirdly, it would create a great traffic with Cairo itself, the capital of Egypt, possessing a population of 300,000, and which, though it was not taken into account in the estimate of the profits of the company, was by no means an item to be overlooked. The depth of the canal was 26 feet, which was looked upon as adequate for all purposes of navigation; and whilst upon the subject of drafts and depths of water, he thought it right to read to the Council a letter which he had received from Mr. Laird, of Birkenhead, the observations made by whom upon the construction of vessels seemed to present a new phase in ship-building.

[Mr. Lange here read the letter, which showed that the depth of 26 feet, which it was intended to give to the canal, would be amply sufficient for all ulterior purposes of navigation, and that it would not hereafter be necessary to deepen it.]

Mr. HUTTON—Perhaps you will allow me to state that in the Red Sea the growth of coral renders navigation very uncertain.

Mr. LANGE—Yes; there are rocks of that nature in the Red Sea, but they merely skirt the coast, and do not at all interfere with the navigation. Stones will have to be brought from the mountains of Attaka on one side, and on the other from M'Salem, and they will likewise have to be procured from Rhodes, Cyprus, and Scarpantum. That appears to be a very long way to go for stones, but we must remember that those used in constructing the sea works of North Holland all came from Norway, and the large jetty which juts out at the Lagoon before Venice all came from Istria, on the opposite side of the coast.

Mr. LANGE went on to say that the safety of the Port of Suez in the Red Sea was further illustrated by the fact that the Zenobia, one of the tenders belonging to the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Company, which was stationed there, had never dragged her anchors or shifted in the least, so the prevailing opinion that the winds there were very dangerous was quite a mistake. On the other hand, he had an opportunity of speaking to some gentlemen who had been there, and also to nautical men who had navigated it for twenty years, and the engineer of the Candia had told him that he had never known what a gale of wind was there. The winds generally blew in one direction, but it was from the side, and consequently facilitated the sailing up or down of the Red Sea. They should remember,

however, that it was not sailing vessels, but steamers and screws that they had calculated upon; although sailing vessels at certain periods of the year, from April to September, could always avail themselves of this canal when going to India or to ports on the Indian side. The saving of distance in going to Ceylon by this means would be just half—7,000 instead of 14,000 miles, and a very favourable feature connected with the cutting of this canal was, that five-sixths of its extent were under the level of the sea. It would naturally occur to them, as commercial men, how many vessels a day would be required to pass through this canal in order to pay a remunerating dividend upon so large an amount of capital. In ordinary times five per cent. upon this sum would amount to £400,000, to which should be added the cost of keeping up the canal, £63,000. It would only require two vessels daily, of 2,500 tons each, to pay double interest and keeping up the cost of the canal. The deputation were prepared with more minute calculations, but they considered it better to lay this startling fact before the Council in the first instance.

Mr. PARKER—You have taken the tonnage very high of those two vessels.

Mr. LANGE explained that he meant any vessels to the extent of 5,000 tons.

Mr. CODD—Does trade at present exist which would justify you in supposing that you could have two vessels daily of 2,500 tons each passing through this canal?

Mr. LANGE—I think there can be very little doubt of it. In our estimates we have taken credit only for the annual increase in foreign shipping at the rate of 100,000 tons per annum, whereas the last accounts show that it is at the rate of 300,000 tons per annum. All this does not go to the East certainly, but a considerable portion of it does; and such is the demand for shipping at some of the ports, that they are not able to build sufficient steamers. It was only the other day I saw the following in a newspaper with regard to Liverpool:—"The steam trade of Liverpool has progressed with such rapid strides that the accommodation is greatly inadequate to the wants of the port; and in consequence the principal owners of steam vessels, the Messrs. Bibby and Son, have intimated their intention of removing the whole of their ships to Southampton if something is not speedily done to remedy the evil."

A Member inquired what might be the expense per ton of the transit through the canal?

Mr. LANGE replied that the charge for the entire distance, including tugs, would be ten francs per ton.

M. DE LESSEPS here observed, in French, that this was the maximum rate allowed by the terms of the concession; it was possible that the charges might even be lower.

Mr. LANGE went on to say that the tugs would be required for sailing vessels. With respect to the capital of £8,000,000, it had been reserved in portions for the various countries of Europe. *(The speaker here made the financial statement previously given.)*

Mr. Codd—You have stated how this canal will shorten distance; can you tell me in what degree it will shorten time?

Mr. LANGE replied, that to steamers, and to sailing vessels under equal circumstances of weather, the shortening of distance by one-half must necessarily shorten time in a proportionate degree; but the actual time that would be occupied in going by this route would of necessity depend upon the state of the wind.

Mr. Boyce inquired whether this project was to be worked as a joint-stock company, or was to be borne by the national purse of each kingdom?

Mr. LANGE replied that it was simply a commercial enterprise, in which all commercial communities were invited to join. It had nothing to do with Government beyond the fact that, of course, the interests of each national community in the company would be naturally protected by its own Government.

Mr. Parker—With regard to the coral reefs in the Red Sea, is it not a fact that from one end of the Red Sea to the other there is a broad, deep, safe channel, sufficient for sailing vessels to work against adverse winds?

Mr. LANGE—Yes; from one end to the other there is a safe and deep channel, upwards of 50 miles in breadth.

The President of the Council inquired in what manner it was proposed to raise the capital?

Mr. LANGE replied that the capital was already reserved, with the exception of England, in the manner he had explained. The other countries named had applied for the shares in those proportions, and were willing to take them if allotted by the company. The present object of M. de Lesseps was to ascertain whether England and Ireland would be disposed to admit the utility of the undertaking, and later to embark financially in it. If such should not be the case, and that England and Ireland should consider that the Suez Canal was not necessary to them, the undertaking would progress notwithstanding, because there was no difficulty in raising the amount. It was a purely mercantile speculation, and had nothing to do with Governments. The management would be centred at Paris, and would be composed of those who had large interests at stake, deputed by the various shareholders in different nations as best qualified to fill that office. These would, of course, appoint among themselves the individuals who would be necessary to ensure the good administration of the project.

The PRESIDENT—In case of war, how would you preserve neutrality?

Mr. LANGE—By each nation having an interest at stake. It is one of the articles in the concession, that it shall be a neutral passage; that no country shall be excluded; and the presence of M. de Lesseps here shows the desire that exists that it shall be a neutral passage.

Mr. CODD—Has the British Government manifested any opposition to the project?

Mr. LANGE—The British Government has not shown any overt act of opposition. M. de Lesseps has not asked the protection of any Government; it is simply a commercial speculation, with which Governments have nothing to do.

Mr. PARKER—You must be aware that the fact of British merchants having stock in an undertaking of this kind by no means obliges the Government to neutrality, or to look upon it as a neutral canal in case of war.

M. DE LESSEPS remarked that it was only the proprietor of the country who could oppose the passage; and as he had given his consent, and was anxious even for the perfect neutrality of the company, there could be no difficulty in the matter.

Mr. LANGE said no one was more anxious than the Viceroy himself in reference to this matter. He was particularly anxious that no one nation should enjoy its advantages, but that it should have the protection of all.

The PRESIDENT—He wishes it to be neutral, and it remains for all other Governments to agree that it shall be so. You cannot push it further than that.

Mr. PARKER said there was another undertaking to which the British Government were favourable—the Euphrates Valley Railway; and he would wish to ask, were the two projects likely in any way to conflict?

Mr. KENNEY entered into a statement for the purpose of showing that they were distinct in their character—the Euphrates Valley line being the route for despatches, whilst their undertaking was simply a Ship Canal. He also read documents which appeared in the *Daily News* in support of his arguments.

The PRESIDENT then inquired—Upon what points would you wish the expression of the opinion of the Council?

Mr. LANGE—The expression we would wish from you is with respect to the utility to commerce in general, and the advantages you think likely to accrue from the canal being made to the trade of Great Britain at large.

The LORD MAYOR—Are we likely to have the approbation of the shipping companies?

Mr. LANGE—Yes; and we have the very strong approbation of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, whose steamers already

run to the East, and would run there directly, without being obliged to stop half-way.

After some further observations, M. de Lesseps and the gentlemen by whom he was accompanied withdrew, the Council undertaking to give the subject every consideration, and to furnish them with their opinions with as little delay as possible.

The resolution passed by the Council is embodied in the following letter from Mr. Francis Codd to M. F. de Lesseps:—

“Chamber of Commerce, Dublin, May 11, 1857.

“Sir,—I am directed by the Council of this Chamber to express to you their acknowledgments for the interesting exposition of your views, with which you favoured them this morning, on the subject of the projected Ship Canal through the Isthmus of Suez.

“The Council are deeply sensible of the important advantages to the interests of commerce and civilization which that project presents; and they consider that, provided means can be adopted to secure the perfect neutrality of the canal, and to ensure a moderate rate of charges on vessels passing through, and perfect impartiality in its management, it will be eminently entitled to commercial support.

“I have the honour to be, Sir,

“Your obedient Servant,

“FRANCIS CODD, Hon. Secretary.

“M. F. de Lesseps.”

C O R K .

PUBLIC MEETING AT THE CORK COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS.

From the "Cork Daily Reporter," May 17, 1857.

According to previous notice, which appeared in the *Reporter*, a public meeting was held yesterday, at three o'clock, p.m., in the Reading-room of the Commercial-buildings, for the purpose of receiving a deputation on behalf of M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, the promulgator of the plan for throwing open the Isthmus of Suez by means of a Ship Canal uniting the Mediterranean with the Red Sea. The deputation consisted of M. de Lesseps, Mr. D. A. Lange, of the firm of Lange, Brothers, and Co., and Mr. C. L. Kenney, Secretary to the Company in London. The object in view by this deputation was merely to get the opinion of the merchants of Cork as to what they think of the proposed plan in a commercial point of view.

The meeting was well attended by the leading merchants of this city.

On the motion of Colonel Beamish, the chair was taken by JOHN NICHOLAS MURPHY, Esq., City High Sheriff.

Col. BEAMISH then proposed that Messrs. V. D. Donegan, and J. Perrier be requested to act as honorary secretaries to the meeting, which was unanimously agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN then said that on the previous day he was requested, in the absence of his Worship the Mayor, to call a meeting for the present occasion; and he much regretted that his Worship was not in Cork to have done so, as the duty would have been so much more perfectly performed by the Mayor; but he had endeavoured to do all in his power, assisted by the sub-sheriff, Mr. Donegan, who exerted himself in every way to give publicity to the matter. He had forwarded circulars to as many commercial gentlemen of the city as he had had time to send them to, he had also inserted an advertisement in the *Reporter*, the only journal which published during the interim, and he felt proud to see, that, although the notice was so very short, yet the attendance was larger than he could have expected under more favourable circumstances. He would again express his regret at the Mayor's absence from the city, as it was so much to be desired that his worship should have presided on the occasion. He had to tell the meeting that M. de Lesseps's sole object in visiting Cork was to lay before the merchants of this city a statement of what has been proposed to be done for the purpose of advancing the interests of commerce, by the canalization of the Isthmus of Suez, and to obtain the opinion of the commercial gentlemen of this city upon the matter. M. de Lesseps did not come to show the practicability of carrying out his plans—as that has been already settled by the decision of eminent engineers; nor did he come to request them to take shares in the company, as the manner of raising the required capital has been determined upon, and the greater part of it subscribed by different nations. But, the Viceroy of Egypt having expressed a wish that M. de Lesseps would get the opinion of the commercial men of the several nations of Europe, he has taken the present mode of obtaining such. As to the work itself, he should say that it is simply proposed to run a Ship Canal from Pelusium, on the Mediterranean, to Suez, on the Red Sea, the length of which will be about 90 miles. This canal, when completed, will shorten the route from this country to our Indian territories by some thousands of miles. From England to Calcutta and Madras, by the Cape of Good Hope, is about 13,000 miles. This canal, he believed, would reduce it to 8,000 miles; the distance to Bombay is 11,500, the length by the proposed route will be but 6,200, or about one-half the present distance. This reduction in the miles he did not consider the only advantage which would be gained, for now that steam is applied so extensively for navigation purposes, he believed that steam-vessels would be placed on this route in greater numbers than they can be while the voyage to the East is so long as that by the Cape. Therefore, in this way an additional

means will be gained of shortening the actual distance. When we come to consider what tea and silk this country imports from China, and the great commerce which we carry on with every country in the East, both in imports and exports, he looked upon the present project as one which particularly interested these kingdoms. He would not detain the meeting any longer, but in conclusion begged to introduce to them Messrs. Lange and Kenney, who would make any statement which M. de Lesseps might wish to lay before the meeting, the latter gentleman not being able himself to do so in English. Before taking his seat he might also add that, in London, the East India Company, and other companies interested in the trade with the East, had expressed their highest approval of the project, as well as the commercial bodies of Manchester and other large towns in England, and the commercial body in Dublin, from which city M. de Lesseps had come to Cork. The speaker then resumed his seat amid the applause of the meeting.

Mr. LANGE then rose to address the meeting, and said that after the very able and lucid statement which had been made by the Chairman, (the High-Sheriff,) relative to the object on which he had visited this city, he had hardly any necessity to add a word to what had been already said. M. de Lesseps had just said to him that it might be as well for Mr. Kenney to read a portion of the report of the eminent engineers who examined the proposed route through which it is intended to run this canal, and he believed their report would place the subject more clearly before the meeting than any statement which might be made by a member of the deputation.

Mr. KENNEY then read lengthened extracts from the report referred to, the entire of which went to show that the canal can be made through the Isthmus of Suez at an expense of £6,000,000, or upwards, and that very few, if any, engineering difficulties lie in the way.

Mr. LANGE then laid a map of the Isthmus on the table, and pointed out the route of the canal, which would be about 92 miles in length from one sea to the other. He considered, however, that it would be useless for him to detain the meeting by going into any details, as the subject had been so fully discussed in Cork already, and therefore he believed that the gentlemen around him were conversant with everything connected with the project. He should only say that if any of those gentlemen wished for an explanation on any particular point, he would endeavour to answer their questions, which might be better than to waste time by a lengthened statement.

Colonel BEAMISH said he had just put down a few questions, which he would take the liberty of putting to those gentlemen who formed the deputation.

Mr. LANGE replied that he would feel happy to answer the questions, if in his power.

Colonel BEAMISH wished to know, in the first place, if the canal be intended for steamers or sailing vessels?

Mr. LANGE—For both.

Colonel BEAMISH—I want to know, now, if the sailing vessels can trade during the whole year, or will the monsoons or winds that prevail in that part of the world interfere with the navigation?

Mr. LANGE said sailing vessels would require to choose their time, as the wind blew generally in one direction from April until December; but sailing vessels had not been much calculated upon; he should say that they could go that route, and return the other.

Colonel BEAMISH—Then, I am to understand that sailing vessels can only go that route one half of the year?

Mr. LANGE—Just so.

Colonel BEAMISH—Then, will not the canal run through a sandy country, and may not this sand slide down and fill up the canal in the course of time?

Mr. LANGE said this was question which he considered easily answered. He should, in the first place, say the sand is not moveable; and he had also to say that the country is not composed exclusively of sand, for it contains a large quantity of clay and saline substance, as has been proved by digging holes to the depth of 50 feet in some places along the route. At the Bitter Lakes there is only in parts a coating of sand, the rest being all a saline substance. It was found that the sands were quite firm, and the very circumstance of the coast not having altered for many centuries was another very important matter; it had undergone no perceivable change, and the ruins of the town of Pelusium existed at the same distance from the shore as they did twenty centuries ago, in the time of Strabo. Along the sides of the canal the land is in some parts covered with shrubs, through which the camels can hardly pass, and this he considered served to show that the country is not all through so sandy as it has been represented.

Colonel BEAMISH—I consider that quite a satisfactory answer. Now let me ask, is there any danger of obstructions arising from collections of sand at the mouth of the canal, such as at the delta of the Nile?

Mr. LANGE replied that there was no fear of this occurring.

Colonel BEAMISH said Sir J. Benson desired him to ask if there were any grounds to fear that a current in the canal would form obstructions of loose sand?

Mr. KENNEY stated that there can be but little current, as there is not more than two feet of difference between the level

of the two seas; and if there were even a strong current from the Red Sea, it could only run $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles, (that is to the Bitter Lakes,) as the wide surface there would draw off any surplus water which came rushing into that place.

Sir. J. BENSON said the current caused by a difference of two feet would be imperceptible.

Colonel BEAMISH—I want to know now if the coral rocks in the Red Sea will in any way impede the navigation?

Mr. KENNEY said that a clear channel of 60 miles breadth existed in the middle of this sea, in which the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers were continually passing and repassing; and between the coral rocks and the shore there were navigable channels for vessels of light draught by which the whole of the native trade was carried on.

Colonel BEAMISH wished to know if the railway through the isthmus and the canal would, in any way, clash with each other?

Mr. LANGE, after speaking in French to M. de Lesseps, said that the latter only wished the railway to be in connection with the canal, and the strongest proof that he could offer that they would not clash with each other was the fact that the Pasha of Egypt, who derives the greatest profits from the railway, is most anxious for the canal.

Mr. SANSFIELD then asked if Mr. Stephenson, an English engineer, who had been sent out as a Commission in company with a French engineer some years ago, had not reported in favour of a railway in preference to the canal?

Mr. KENNEY replied that M. de Lesseps directed him to say that Mr. Stephenson did make such a report, but it was more because of some difference of opinion which existed, and which he wished to settle, than on the grounds of a railway being preferable to a canal.

Mr. SANSFIELD then introduced the important question of the benefit which this canal would be to these kingdoms, and remarked that it might be the means of draining off some of the present trade which England carries on with the East to the countries on the Mediterranean, &c.

Mr. LANGE said the best answer to that was, that at present England owns nine-tenths of the vessels which trade between Suez and the East, in connection with the overland route.

Sir J. BENSON remarked, that no matter what mode of conveyance might be invented, water will ever continue to be the cheapest; therefore, he considered it would be much better if vessels could go direct with their cargoes through the Isthmus, by water, instead of discharging them at one side and re-loading other vessels at the other, which causes additional expense and much delay.

Mr. SANSFIELD said he was not quite satisfied with respect to the effect it might have on the trade of these kingdoms, but as he seemed to be alone, he would withdraw any remark of his. (Hear, hear.)

Colonel BEAMISH then said he was perfectly satisfied with all he had heard, and he felt convinced this canal would be of great service to the commercial interests of these kingdoms. After going into details of the many advantages which he considered so short a route to the East would confer upon us, he begged to move the resolution.

The VEN. ARCHDEACON of Cork begged to second the motion, which was put and carried with acclamation.

The ARCHDEACON then begged to move that the High Sheriff vacate the chair, and that Colonel Beamish be called thereto; which was accordingly done; after which he moved that the thanks of the meeting be given to the High Sheriff for the manner in which he had acted, both in calling the meeting and in presiding over it.

The HIGH SHERIFF acknowledged the compliment.

Mr. LANGE returned thanks to the chairman and gentlemen present, on behalf of M. de Lesseps, for the reception he had met with in Cork.

M. de Lesseps and the gentlemen who were with him, accompanied by the French Consul in this city, then withdrew, and the meeting soon after separated.

We subjoin the text of the resolutions mentioned in the above report:—

“At a meeting of the trading and mercantile interests of Cork, united with many of the other residents of the city and neighbourhood, held at the Commercial-buildings, on Wednesday, the 13th day of May, 1857; the High Sheriff of the City in the chair—

“It was proposed by Lieutenant-Colonel Beamish, K.H., J.P., seconded by N. Cummings, Esq., J.P., and Resolved—

“That the Under-Sheriff and Mr. Perrier be requested to act as honorary secretaries to this meeting.

“Proposed by Lieutenant-Colonel Beamish,

seconded by the Archdeacon of Cork, and Resolved unanimously—

“That, having heard the able and interesting statement of Mr. Lange, on the part of M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, relative to the proposed construction of a Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez, we readily give expression to our opinion of the utility and advantages of the projected work, its great importance to the commercial world, and more particularly to the trade and commerce of the British Isles.

“The Archdeacon then moved that the High Sheriff should leave the chair, and that it be taken by Lieutenant-Colonel Beamish.

“J. N. MURPHY, High Sheriff.

“On the motion of the Archdeacon, the best thanks of the meeting were accorded to the High Sheriff, for his dignified conduct in the chair, as well as for the lucid manner in which he had laid the subject before the meeting.

“D. V. DONEGAN, Under Sheriff, } Hon.
“J. B. PERRIER, } Secs.”

BELFAST.

THE BELFAST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Extract from the "Northern Whig," May 19, 1857.

Yesterday a meeting of the Council of the Chamber of Commerce was held at that building, for the purpose of hearing from the promoters of the above undertaking a statement respecting it.

The chair was taken by ROBERT GRIMSHAW, Esq., President.

The other members present were—James Hamilton, William Valentine, Robert Henderson, John Hunter, jun., Thomas M'Clure, John Thomson, Charles Duffin, James Lemon, John F. Ferguson, and John Lemon, Esqrs.

The gentlemen present on behalf of the undertaking were—M. de Lesseps, and Daniel Lange and Charles Kenney, Esqrs.

The CHAIRMAN—Gentlemen, I have the honour to introduce to you Monsieur de Lesseps, Mr. Lange, and Mr. Kenney. They attend here to explain to you the advantages of this great project of cutting a Ship Canal through the Isthmus of Suez. It is a thing we would be glad to see carried into effect; and I believe there is every probability of its being done, if these gentlemen get the support of the public bodies throughout the kingdom. They merely ask for an expression of your feeling on the matter, after they explain it to you.

Mr. KENNEY then said, that, as M. de Lesseps was not sufficiently fluent in their language, he had charged him to deliver such explanation of the project as they might desire.

M. DE LESSEPS then proceeded to address the meeting in the French language, which was interpreted, from time to time, by Mr. Kenney, to the following effect:—

He said that he was charged, by the Viceroy of Egypt, to form a company for making a Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez, the basis of which was a concession granted by the Viceroy of Egypt, in the form of a firman, by which the conditions under which this company was to be formed were regulated. One of the articles, No. 14 in the concession, stated that the canal was to be for the benefit of all nations, and the neutrality of the passage was a condition laid down; another was, that the charge made for vessels using the canal was also fixed at a maximum rate of ten francs per ton. That was the utmost that could be levied, but it might be less than that, and it included, also, the charge for tugging vessels through the canal. The administration of the company would be in the hands of a board of directors, and, as the shares would be allocated to all nations that might make use of the canal, they would be each represented on the directory.

MR. LEMON—Is this charge of ten francs for the whole length of the canal?

MR. KENNEY—Yes. There is before you a map of the Isthmus, showing the track of the canal from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, which has been fixed and laid down by the International Commission of Engineers, whose report was recently published. Among the members of that Commission was Mr. McClean, a gentleman, he believed, who bore a very high reputation in Belfast. Mr. McClean surveyed the whole line of the Isthmus from one end to the other. Here the speaker entered into details of the plan, and concluded by saying, that M. de Lesseps had requested Mr. Lange to address the meeting on some of the commercial advantages of the undertaking.

MR. LANGE then came forward and said—Mr. President and Gentlemen, you have now heard a brief sketch of the details of this line; and I shall now add a few words with regard to the advantages likely to accrue to commerce from its being opened. We have been at Manchester, Liverpool, Cork, and Dublin, and we have taken Belfast, which is a very important place for us, on our route to Scotland. It is very important for us to have the opinion of so intelligent a portion of the mercantile community as we are now addressing. In our estimates we have chiefly relied upon steam vessels and screws; and, taking into account the actual number of screws in existence, they would already form sufficient to make the canal pay very well. In 1854, it appears, according to the statistics of the Board of Trade, the sailing vessels were 4,000,000 and the steamers 300,000 tons;

and a considerable increase has been made since then. It is merely necessary to refer to the navigation now carried on between Newcastle and France to show how rapidly screws are superseding sailing vessels. Sir John Benson showed us, at Cork, the other day, a very large screw vessel building there, which is intended to sail up the Seine to Paris. We have already mentioned that the depth of water in the canal would be 26 feet; and, with reference to the tendency of the draught of water in vessels, we had a very interesting statement from Mr. Laird, of Birkenhead, with a view to show that we had sufficient depth. He stated, that he had built a vessel of 2,250 tons, which drew 20 feet of water; but he considered about 22 feet to be about the greatest draught which any vessels need have for general trade to all parts of the world. A new feature has shown itself, of late, in connexion with this undertaking; and it was the result of a meeting which was held in London of the Society of Arts. They passed a resolution which told in favour of our undertaking, and it was there stated by Mr. Smith, M. P. for Stockport, that the Province of Candeish alone, in India, was capable of growing more cotton than is now grown in the United States. The reasons why I am stating these facts is with reference to the utility of the canal in carrying out the proposed alteration in the cotton trade. In fact, the only solution of it is the opening up of this canal, because we admit that, if we discourage slavery, we prevent the growth of cotton from extending; and, therefore, we should not be entirely dependent on America for our supplies of cotton. We want to transfer the trade in cotton from America to India, and it happens that the Province of Candeish is so situated that it would form the nearest point to be reached through the canal. Here is, therefore, a new phase altogether—one on which we had hardly calculated. The other feature I would now like to point out to you is, the changes in our relations with China, and the effects they are likely to produce on the success of this enterprise. In time, China must become one of our largest buyers. It is not surprising, therefore, to find countries coming to take a share of the capital reserved for them; and M. de Lesseps had fixed, in his own mind, the proportions in which it should be allocated—(*Financial Statement*)—[Mr. Lange here read an extract from an article in the *Times*.] I think there can be no doubt that these statements expressed by the *Times* are largely shared in by all commercial bodies. It is very evident, from these facts, that the great drawback on our foreign trade is want of regularity. Being myself an Australian merchant, I can say, from my own knowledge, how trade is embarrassed and disturbed by summer goods arriving in winter, and winter goods coming to hand in

summer; and the expense of storage being so great it is impossible to keep them, and they must be sold at any price to avoid it. The only drawback on our trade in the East seems to be want of regular communication with India. England wants to compete with America in regard to the cotton trade. It is difficult to see how great, how enormous, the advantages in that respect that must accrue from this canal being open. A regular trade will be obtained, and merchants will be able to calculate, almost to a day, on the arrival of their goods. Even we ourselves feel that however greatly we before estimated the results of the canal, we have been far under the mark. We feel that these features which are now being developed will make it, in point of remuneration, far more desirable than we expected. Gentlemen, I shall not detain you any longer on these points. I have given you a short outline of the commercial advantages likely to result from the undertaking, and it is for you to form your own judgment upon it, because I feel that I am surrounded by men who understand all these matters far better than ourselves.

Mr. THOMSON said that, on Saturday, the gentleman who last spoke called on him and left Mr. Kenney's interesting pamphlet, so appropriately entitled "The Gates of the East," and he had read it through with extreme pleasure. He found from it that nearly all the countries in Europe were most anxious to see this project carried out. The line was most favourable, the greater portion of it being under the level of the seas. But while most of the countries in Europe were most anxious for it, he would be glad to know why the Government of Great Britain refused to be a party to it? They had, from time to time, thrown difficulties in its way. Before, therefore, the meeting came to any conclusion, it would be very desirable if the deputation could inform the meeting why our own Government threw these difficulties in the way. As far as he could judge, the idea was a most admirable one; and he should like to ask those gentlemen if the Government participated in the views they came there to express, or if they were hostile to the undertaking?

Mr. FERGUSON said, it occurred to him that the subject ought to be taken into consideration by the Council themselves. He for one thought that, having got all the information they desired from these gentlemen, the better way for them would be to consider the matter among themselves, when they could discuss it more freely.

Mr. KENNEY said, that M. de Lesseps begged to state that he was much obliged for the observations of Mr. Thomson; and, in answer to his question as to why the English Government had hitherto stood aloof from the project, it was because they were not informed of the light in which the shipping and

mercantile interests of England would regard it; and it would very much facilitate their (the Government) arriving at a conclusion on the matter when they should have gathered together the result of those meetings which they (the Deputation) were promoting through Great Britain. He (M. de Lesseps) wished to convey that he had no grievance against the Government; on the contrary, he honoured them for waiting the decision of that class whose interests were most involved. Several Governments had come forward, but the matter had not been referred to any Government whatever. It was a private commercial project, in the hands of mercantile men.

The CHAIRMAN—Do you entertain the principle of colonising the sides of the canal?

Mr. KENNEY—It has never been suggested or proposed. So much of the land as can be irrigated by the waters of the canal will be ceded to the Company—that is, 150,000 acres in summer, and 90,000 in winter, on a length of 60 miles.

In reply to Mr. Hamilton,

Mr. KENNEY said, the current would be about two miles an hour.

Mr. VALENTINE asked, why was not Alexandria made the terminus?

M. DE LESSEPS replied, that it would interfere with the very complicated system of irrigation in Egypt, and the Viceroy would not desire to have it cut up to accommodate the commerce of other nations.

In reply to Mr. Ferguson,

M. DE LESSEPS said, the width of the canal would be about 330 feet.

The Deputation then retired to the waiting-room, and the Council proceeded to discuss the matters themselves, the Reporters being permitted to remain.

The CHAIRMAN read the resolutions of the Chambers of Commerce of Manchester and Cork, highly approving of the project; and then intimated that he was obliged to leave to attend a railway meeting of some importance, but the Vice-President would take the chair in his absence.

The chair was then taken by Thomas M'Clure, Esq.

Mr. THOMSON said he understood, from an article he had read, that there were hostilities to the project in Turkey.

The CHAIRMAN said, the policy of the British Government had always been to encourage every project that would extend, increase, and facilitate commerce; and he did not believe they would throw any difficulty in the way of this, when they gathered the opinions of the commercial community upon it.

Mr. BARNETT—It is perfectly evident to every person en-

gaged in trade, that the canal would be of great commercial advantage.

Mr. FERGUSON would recommend the Chamber not to embarrass themselves by going into extraneous considerations. The view he felt inclined to take of it was, that they should consider the matter as if they were disposed to take shares in it or not.

The CHAIRMAN—I think we are not asked to consider it in that light at present.

Mr. THOMSON—I think you ought to pass the strongest resolution you can word in favour of it; it is one of the grandest projects we have ever had before us.

Mr. BRISTOW—The advantages of it, in a commercial point of view, cannot be doubted. If the difficulty about the Government had been left out of their pamphlet, there could be no second opinion about the matter. I think, one ground for our Government not supporting it must be political; but of that we know nothing. There is another that strikes me, and it is, that there may be an objection, on the part of the East India Company, to facilitate communication with the East. I cannot conceive any hostility, on the part of the Government, on any other than political grounds, and therefore we should consider the matter only on its own merits.

Mr. HAMILTON—It may be this, that the concession is given to a French Company, and that it depends on their will and pleasure whether England shall have an interest in it or not.

Mr. FERGUSON—From the information I have received on the subject, I am really not prepared to pledge myself to it; and, therefore, I would vote for postponing the consideration of the question.

Mr. BRISTOW then handed in two resolutions which he had written, and which he intended to propose. The first was a vote of thanks to M. de Lesseps for the "very satisfactory" statement he had laid before them; but, at the suggestion of Mr. Ferguson, the words "very interesting" were substituted.

The CHAIRMAN then put the motion as follows:—

"Resolved—That the thanks of this Council are due to M. Lesseps, for the very interesting statement he has submitted to them on the subject of the proposed Ship Canal from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea."

This was seconded by Mr. Henderson, and passed unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN then put the second resolution as follows: "Resolved—That this Council deem the project a most important one to the interests of commerce generally; and that, provided it can be carried out with a sufficient guarantee for the complete neutrality of passage through the canal, at moderate rates, it would be most desirable for these countries, as well as for the whole world, that the project be completed with as little delay as possible."

This was seconded by Mr. Hamilton, and passed unanimously.

The Deputation were then called in, and the resolutions having been read for them by the chairman, M. de Lesseps thanked the meeting for their courtesy, and the meeting broke up.

MEETING OF HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS.

"Belfast, May 20, 1857.

"Resolved—That this Board is of opinion that the forming of a Canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea would be a work of universal utility to the world at large; and, therefore, they hope to see the undertaking speedily carried out, free from any exclusively national control, and confining the charge for towage and passage to ten francs per ton, as proposed by the proprietors of the undertaking and explained by M. Ferdinand de Lesseps.

"JOHN CLARKE, *Chairman*,

"Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

"*Copia Vera.*

"EDMUND GETTY, *Secretary.*"

GLASGOW.

PUBLIC MEETING AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

Extract from the "Glasgow Courier," May 21, 1857.

Yesterday afternoon a meeting of the merchants, bankers, manufacturers, and shipowners of Glasgow, was held in the Council Chamber, to hear the explanation of M. Ferdinand de Lesseps relative to the proposed Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez.

Baillie WRIGHT, acting Chief Magistrate, occupied the chair, and amongst the gentlemen present we observed, the Dean of Guild; M. Mauboussin; Wm. Johnstone, Esq.; John Wilson, Esq.; W. J. Davidson, Esq., of Ruchill; Dr. Strang; J. Tennant, Esq. of St. Rollox; John Smith, Esq., &c.

The CHAIRMAN said that, in the absence of the Lord Provost, he had considered it to be his duty to call the present meeting, in order to afford M. de Lesseps an opportunity of giving explanations as to the formation of the proposed Canal across the Isthmus of Suez. After that statement was made he had no doubt he would be willing to answer any questions which might be suggested by gentlemen present.

Mr. DANIEL ADOLPHUS LANGE then rose and addressed the meeting. He said—I fear it is no easy matter for any one to attempt to point out the advantages likely to accrue from the

opening of a route which will bring into closer contact a population of 300,000,000 in the West and 600,000,000 in the Eastern quarter of the globe, and this is what the cutting of the canal will effect. The distance to cut through is only 90 miles, and this shortening effects a saving of 5,000 miles in space and time. I shall not attempt to point out the advantages, but simply confine myself to a few details respecting this important project. (*Here the speaker entered into details of the plan.*) He next entered into a statement to prove that the construction of steam vessels, compared with sailing ships, is making rapid strides, and demonstrated that the financial results of the company would consequently be more favourable than was even at first calculated on; that there would be a saving of 50 francs per ton to vessels taking the route by the canal instead of going round the Cape. The items chiefly affected would be interest on capital invested in ships, insurance, wear and tear, wages, provisions, and insurance on freights. And as more than three-fourths of the trade with the East is carried on in British vessels, it follows that England will reap the greatest benefit from the formation of the canal. Mr Lange proceeded to say—It is admitted on all sides that Candeish, a province in India, containing 5,000,000 of acres suited for the growth of cotton, can produce more than sufficient cotton to supply the wants of Great Britain. The present consumption is 900 millions of pounds weight, of which 700 millions is drawn from America. Our tenure in America for the supply of cotton is precarious, for in proportion as we succeed in putting down the odious traffic in slaves, our supplies must necessarily fall off, and when our Indian resources become more fully developed (and great efforts are making at present to bring this about), the trade in cotton with India will assume a very important aspect. The great drawback, however, seems to be a want of regularity in our shipments; and it has been stated, at a recent meeting held in London for the purpose of investigating this great question, that if we want to compete successfully with America, we must have regular and speedy communication. This, gentlemen, is what the opening of the Suez Canal is intended to effect, and by these means we are unconsciously removing the great barrier which interposes against our trade in the East. Another feature of great importance is the development of the immense resources in China through the means of European interference and management. It is difficult to say what results may ensue from the circumstance of China becoming a purchasing country; hitherto they have only been sellers, and it appears a fortunate decree that our attention should have been drawn to Candeish, because with our own immense increasing consumption of cotton, our

insecure tenure for supplies from America, and the enormous demand upon our manufacturing resources which may ultimately accrue from the Chinese becoming buyers, we should have difficulty in supplying the wants of all were it not for the circumstance of our future prospects in Candeish, from whence such enormous supplies may be expected. I shall not detain you with any prolonged statement, being satisfied that every one feature in particular will afford you a wide field for reflexion as to the advantages likely to accrue to the commerce of England; and it is the results of these deliberations among yourselves which we have this day come to ascertain. (Applause.)

Mr. DAVIDSON asked the difference of the level betwixt the two seas?

Mr. C. L. KENNEY stated that there was scarcely any difference at all.

In answer to other questions, he stated there were no rocks to cut through in making the canal, and that it could be deepened to any extent.

The DEAN of GUILD asked if any reason could be given for the British Government not having given the undertaking its support.

Mr. KENNEY, on behalf of M. de Lesseps, stated that he (M. de Lesseps) believed the reason why Government had not pronounced any opinion in favour of it was because, as he imagined, they would be in a better position to do so after the different mercantile bodies had themselves expressed an opinion with regard to the advantages likely to accrue to commerce in general from the formation of the canal, and that he admired the patriotism of a British Government in standing aloof until the different Chambers had had an opportunity of coming to a decision.

The DEAN of GUILD asked how the capital was to be raised?

Mr. LANGE replied, that as the company was to be a universal one, in which all nations were called upon to join, M. de Lesseps had reserved the following portions for the different countries:—Egypt and Turkey, £2,000,000; Germany, Holland, Belgium and Italy, £1,000,000; North of Europe, £1,000,000; United States, Spain and Portugal, £1,000,000; France, £1,500,000; and for England, £1,500,000.

Mr. JOHN TENNANT then moved the following resolution:—

“That this meeting, having heard the statement of M. Ferdinand de Lesseps relative to the proposed Ship Canal through the Isthmus of Suez, consider that, the result of that undertaking being to shorten the navigation between Europe and the

Eastern Seas and to ensure greater regularity in the commercial transactions between those parts of the globe, its execution would be highly favourable to the trading and shipping interests of Great Britain."

The motion was seconded by the Dean of Guild, and unanimously adopted.

Mr. LANGE thanked the meeting for the attention they had shown to the subject, and for the resolution they had so unanimously adopted.

A vote of thanks having been given to the Chairman, the meeting separated.

EDINBURGH AND LEITH.

Extract from the "Daily Scotsman."

A meeting was held in the Council Chamber on the 26th inst. to hear the explanations of M. Ferdinand de Lesseps relative to the proposed Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez.

Baillie BROWN DOUGLAS occupied the chair, in the absence of the Lord Provost; and among the gentlemen present were Lord Murray, Dr. Schmitz, Mr. Charles Maclaren, Mr. Archibald Thomson, Mr. R. M. Smith, Mr. John Ritchie, Mr. F. M. Heriot, Dr. Renton, Mr. D. M'Laren, Mr. A. B. Wright, Mr. F. Richardson, &c.

Mr. KENNEY stated that the proposed canal would be ninety miles long, extending in a direction almost due north across the Isthmus of Suez. At each extremity the entrance would be by two jetties, the one in the Bay of Pelusium, and the other in the Red Sea: the former two miles in extent, and the latter a mile and a quarter. The soil through which the canal would be cut was, on the surface, sandy and gravelly, but below it was chiefly clay, and it was of a nature extremely favourable to the operations of executing the work. After disposing of several objections which had been started as to the practicability of the undertaking, and showing that the difference of level between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean was very small, and not worth taking into account, that there would be little or no shifting sands likely to fill up the canal when made as had been alleged, and that the Bay of Pelusium was not an unfavourable anchorage for vessels, Mr. Kenney mentioned that the tide rising in the Red Sea would be absorbed a short distance up the canal by the Bitter Lakes, which extended over the surface of the land for several miles.

Mr. D. A. LANGE entered into further explanations. M. de

Lesseps, he said, had been empowered by a concession granted to him by the Viceroy of Egypt to form a company, which all nations were asked to join. Engineers of the first eminence having placed the practicability of the undertaking beyond a doubt, the Viceroy of Egypt now desired to elicit, from the different corporate bodies in Europe, expressions of opinion in regard to its utility; and for this purpose M. de Lesseps had already visited a large number of the towns of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and everywhere resolutions in favour of the advantages likely to accrue to commerce in general from the formation of the canal had been passed. It had been stated by some that the Mediterranean ports would derive great benefits from the piercing of the canal; and some regret seemed to have been expressed on this account. No doubt they would be benefited, but he was happy to say that such sentiments were not shared in in Manchester, Liverpool, Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Glasgow, and Aberdeen; and that M. de Lesseps had obtained from eleven different Chambers of Commerce, Associations, and Municipal bodies, the strongest expressions in favour of this important project. But on this subject, and with a view of meeting every question which might present itself, he wished to add the following facts:—According to the last returns from Alexandria it appeared that, during the month of March, twenty five Austrian, and nine Greek, Ottoman, and Tuscan vessels left Alexandria; but against this number there were forty-two English ships engaged in the export trade from Alexandria, and out of all these forty-two vessels only five sailed from Trieste. The supposition, therefore, that closer proximity would give an advantage to those ports appeared to be unfounded. Our supremacy in shipping was even shown in those waters; and it was certainly unreasonable to assume that we should not maintain it over our colonies and possessions. In their estimates the promoters of the canal had relied on steamers and screws rather than on sailing-vessels, because the latter would have to choose the proper seasons, which were favourable from April to the middle of September, for the passage outwards, and during the rest of the year for the passage homewards. It appeared from their calculations that the capital of the undertaking being eight millions, including one and a-half for interest during the construction of the works, would annually give them £400,000 of interest. The estimated cost of keeping up the canal was £63,000 per annum. Nearly double this would be realised by the passage of two vessels of 2,500 tons each daily. This showed with how few vessels the canal would pay. Mr. Lange proceeded to say that it was admitted on all sides that Candeish, a province in India containing five millions of acres suited for

the growth of cotton, could produce more than sufficient to supply the wants of Great Britain. The present consumption was 900 millions of pounds weight, of which 700 millions were drawn from America. But our tenure in America for the supply of cotton was precarious; for in proportion as we succeeded in putting down the odious traffic in slaves, our supplies must necessarily fall off; and when our Indian resources become more fully developed (and great efforts were making at present to bring this about), the trade in cotton with India would assume a very important aspect. The great drawback, however, seemed to be a want of regularity in our shipments; and it had been stated at a recent meeting held in London for the purpose of investigating this great question, that if we wanted to compete successfully with America, we must have regular and speedy communications. This was what the opening of the Suez Canal was intended to effect, and by these means they were unconsciously removing the great barrier to our trade in the East. Australia, also, would derive an immense benefit from it; and another feature of much importance was the opening up of the resources of China, from which much might be expected.

Dr. RENTON inquired if means would be adopted for rendering the Suez Canal, as well as the Red Sea, available by steam-tugs for sailing vessels?

Mr. LANGE said that there would be steam-tugs at both ends of the canal for sailing vessels.

Mr. HARRISON asked what would be the saving effected on a vessel coming from British India, by making use of the canal?

Mr. LANGE said the saving would be 50*f.* a ton. Going to Bombay, the distance was 14,000 miles by the present route; by the canal it would be 7,000 miles; a vessel would, therefore, save half the time consumed in the present voyage.

It was also stated that the depth of the canal will be twenty-six feet; that the Viceroy of Egypt would supply the men for the work; that by spadework the excavations could be carried on to the depth of twelve or fifteen feet, and that dredgers would be used to remove a large portion of the soil.

Mr. D. M'LAREN then proposed that the meeting should approve of the object in view, and convey a vote of thanks to M. de Lesseps and his friends, who had explained it. Mr. M'Laren observed that he did not believe the work was impracticable; it was a mere question of money, and if the money was found the work would be done. As to the jealousy which it had been said existed in this country with reference to the advantages which France might reap from the construction of the canal, he thought that Britain would gain far more in proportion, and that therefore the scheme should be supported.

Mr. CHARES MACLAREN, in seconding the motion, remarked that he would only re-echo the words of the French Academy—that this was an undertaking which, if successfully accomplished, would be of the very greatest advantage, not only to this country, but to the whole human race.

The CHAIRMAN, in submitting the resolution to the meeting, briefly summed up the result of what they had that day heard ; from which he stated it was satisfactorily made clear that the undertaking, in an engineering point of view, was perfectly practicable ; and, indeed, he would be a bold man who should say that in the advanced state of modern science, a project such as this could not be carried out. Secondly, it was equally evident that the advantages to the commerce of the country would be very proportionably great indeed ; and although it might possibly be that greater advantages even might accrue from it to France, and to other nations having ports in the Mediterranean, in the face of the very clear benefits that would arise to England, this consideration was not to be looked upon in the light of a drawback. There was a third point of view in which the project had to be regarded—namely, whether it would prove remunerative ; but this was only a question for those to consider who felt inclined to embark their money in the undertaking. From all appearance, however, capitalists would see a sufficient prospect of returns to furnish the necessary amount.

Mr. LANGE having acknowledged the vote of thanks, the meeting separated.

ABERDEEN.

PUBLIC MEETING IN THE TOWN HALL.

(Extract from the "Aberdeen Journal," May 27, 1857.)

A meeting called by the Lord Provost was held in the Town-hall on Saturday afternoon, to meet M. de Lesseps, (Minister Plenipotentiary,) and Mr. D. A. Lange, to hear their explanations relative to the proposed Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez. The meeting was numerously attended by the leading shipowners and mercantile men of the City, including Geo. Thompson, Esq., late M.P.; Dean of Guild Rose; Baillie Adamson; Baillie Oswald; Councillors Jamieson, Ross, and Williams; A. Nicol, Esq.; W. Reid, Esq.; A. Thomson, Esq., banker; Jas. Westland, Esq., banker; P. Keith, Esq., banker; A. B. Whyte, Esq.; Professors Thomson and Fuller, King's College; Professor Nicol, Marischal College; John D. Milne, jun., Esq., advocate; W. M'Combie, Esq.; W. Forsyth, Esq.; John Angus, Esq.; Alex. Anderson, Esq., advocate; John Cook and James Aiken, Esqs., shipowners, &c. &c.

The Lord Provost having taken the chair, said he had the pleasure of introducing to the meeting M. de Lesseps and Mr. Lange, who had come to Aberdeen after having visited several of the other large commercial and manufacturing emporiums of Great Britain, on a very important errand, namely, to explain, in behalf of His Highness the Viceroy of

Egypt, the design of making a Ship Canal between the Mediterranean and Red Seas, through the Isthmus of Suez. M. de Lesseps had instructions from the Viceroy to obtain the views of the great mercantile and commercial cities of this country upon this subject, as to the expression of these views his Highness will attach great importance, and will, to no small extent, be guided by them in coming to a decision. The Viceroy had himself expressed the most favourable and liberal sentiments in regard to the project, and Mr. Lange would be happy to give any information, or remove objections which might be stated regarding the undertaking, as also to answer any questions which might occur to the shipowners of Aberdeen, who were so well represented, he was glad to see, here. His lordship then introduced—

MR. LANGE, who said—Gentlemen, we are not disappointed in the importance we attached to an expression of opinion from a body so influential and important as that I have now the honour of addressing. The readiness with which you have responded to the call of the Lord Provost proves to us how fully you realise the importance of the project now before you; and to the Lord Provost I wish to express, on behalf of M. de Lesseps and myself, in the strongest terms, the gratitude which we feel for the prompt, energetic, and intelligent manner in which he set about convening this meeting; and we are indebted to his position, and to the esteem in which we find he is generally held, for the success of the present meeting. Our object in coming amongst you, gentlemen, is to elicit your opinion as to the undertaking we have in contemplation. We are aware that, to the people of Aberdeen, it is not of that great importance, perhaps, which it assumes to other cities; but, being also aware of the importance of this place as a shipping port, we are anxious to obtain an expression of public opinion here regarding the project. It is not the expression of individual opinion we are anxious to have; we want your opinion as a community as to its advantages to commerce generally. I shall take occasion to enter into a few details of the scheme (for his lordship has stated the principal features most distinctly and correctly); at the same time I wish you to understand that our visit is not simply one for the purpose of proving to you that this great work can be done; that would be foreign to our present mission among you, seeing that that has already been effected by the most eminent engineers. No expense has been spared in making investigations as to the practicability of the scheme, as you will find by the books on the table. The advantages of the undertaking to commerce it is for you to decide; and, after I have entered into details with regard to the canal (which I hope may be interesting to you), it will be apparent, I

think, that those advantages will be most important. (*Here the speaker entered into details of the plan.*) I will not detain you longer, gentlemen, with regard to details—as on that point I think I have said sufficient. Just let me add, ere concluding, that the formation of this canal is a universal undertaking, in which all countries are interested, and in which no one country is to have an undue advantage. (Applause.)

In answer to the Lord Provost,

Mr. LANGE said, that it was merely an expression of opinion M. de Lesseps wished from the meeting. Nothing of a pecuniary nature as to gentlemen taking part in the undertaking was contemplated in their visit. In reply to other queries, Mr. LANGE stated that there was no competing canal—a Railway they did not consider in the light of a competitor. The depth of the canal was to be 26 feet—quite sufficient, as they had learned from competent authorities, to allow very large vessels to sail through it.

Mr. THOMPSON (late M.P. for the city) said that Mr. Lange had stated shipowners might be disposed to express an opinion in regard to the matter. As a shipowner, he (Mr. T.) had to say, that, while he considered it interesting to his class as a body, it was equally so to the whole mercantile and manufacturing bodies of the country. Indeed, it might be said it was a project in which all classes of the community were interested, for anything that could facilitate intercourse between this country and the East deserved their best consideration and attention. (Hear, hear.) It was more particularly, however, in regard to the transmission of cargoes of goods that the undertaking was to be considered favourably; and, looking upon it in this light, he thought it was extremely desirable that a project of this important nature should receive liberal countenance. In the meantime, however, they were called upon merely to give it their moral support and countenance, if they considered it calculated to benefit society at large; and seeing that Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and other large cities had done so, he could not see that in Aberdeen they could be far wrong in following their example. (Hear, and applause.) He was not of opinion that, as regarded sailing vessels bound for Australia, the projected canal would be of much value, because it was well known the Red Sea was very dangerous from the number of rocks in it. To steam-ships, however, it would be of great advantage, as they could easily evade—by being able to keep a direct course—the rocks of the Red Sea. There could be no doubt the scheme was worthy of countenance, notwithstanding this; though he must say that if any enterprising individuals would cut a canal across the Isthmus of Panama, connecting both sides of the Atlantic, it would be hailed with still greater

satisfaction, because it would be still more conducive to the advantage of the commercial world. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. LANGE, in reply to a question by the Provost, said the whole route had been examined, and reported upon by the first engineers in Europe—and he believed that the dangers of the Red Sea had been greatly exaggerated. Captain Harris, who made a report, had, in the course of twenty years, at least seventy times traversed the Red Sea, and he said it was not more dangerous than the Mediterranean or Asiatic Seas, and that the dangers so much spoken of did not in reality exist. He (Mr. L.) had enjoyed frequent opportunities of conversing with gentlemen well acquainted with the navigation of the Red Sea, and their statements were to the same effect. One engineer said, that, during twenty years' experience in sailing the Red Sea, he could not recollect one severe gale. Indeed, he believed the dangers were very much like those ascribed as being characteristic of the Black Sea—but which were found, during the late war, of most insignificant importance. One very important observation had been made by Mr. Thompson—namely, that a canal through Panama would be more advantageous to the commercial world than the one through Suez. He (Mr. L.) thought, however, he was justified in saying that this would not be found the case. At a meeting recently held in London it was proposed to colonize the land in Candeish, for the purpose of growing cotton. It was found that our own imports of cotton amounted only to 900,000,000 of pounds weight. We take from America every year 700,000,000, but the trade there has suddenly reacted, for, by the success of the measures for the suppression of the slave trade, we diminish the chances of supplies from that quarter; and, as our Indian resources become developed, there can be no doubt but that the trade in cotton with that country will assume very great importance. The great difficulty and drawback, however, in fully developing our Eastern trade, was apparently the want of regularity in our shipments; and it was stated at the meeting in London alluded to, that, if we wished to compete successfully with America, we must be able to command speedy and regular communication. By the opening of the Suez Canal we could effect this speed and regularity, and thus remove one of the chief barriers which interpose between us and our trade in the East. Then look at the importance of being able to develop the immense resources of China through the means of European interference and management. It was difficult, indeed, to say what results might ensue from the Chinese becoming purchasers in place of continuing, as hitherto, sellers—and most fortunate it is that, seeing our insecure tenure of supplies of cotton from America, coupled with our yearly increasing consumption of that article, that

attention had been drawn to Candeish—a quarter from whence enormous supplies of cotton might with certainty be expected. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Lange said he would be happy to answer any further queries.

The DEAN of GUILD thought there was one important point which had not been noticed—one, indeed, on which depended the success, in a great measure, of the undertaking—namely, the speed at which vessels could be conveyed through the canal. That again would depend greatly on whether there would be many locks. He would also like to know the breadth of the canal, and whether vessels could pass each other? Further, what means would be employed to take them through?

Mr. LANGE, in answer, said that the width of the canal would be 330 feet from the Red Sea to the Bitter Lakes—from thence to the Mediterranean, 262 feet—quite sufficient width to allow vessels of large size to pass and repass. There would be tugs for drawing the vessels through the canal—and, as there was only a difference of two feet between the level of the connected seas, no locks whatever would be necessary.

The DEAN of GUILD said it was certainly of importance to find that no locks would be required on the canal—seeing how much they would affect the speedy passage of the vessels. Regarding the utility of the projected Suez Canal, he (the Dean) held very much the same opinion as had been expressed by Mr. Thompson. The advantages to neighbouring countries would be exceedingly great; the benefits, however, to be derived from the canal connecting this country and the distant provinces of India and China did not appear to him so apparent.

Mr. NICOL asked if the East India Company viewed the undertaking in a favourable light, and whether they had given it any support?

Mr. LANGE replied, that, two years ago, M. de Lesseps had held communication with the East India Company on the subject, and their answer was that when the canal was finished it could not but prove of great benefit.

Mr. THOMPSON made a remark that, as the estimated sum for taking vessels through was to be ten francs per ton, the expense on ships of large tonnage would be pretty considerable—on an average £400 or £500—yet, seeing that the canal would save considerably in sailing, this was not to be regarded as a material objection. Our Government had been rather supine in regard to the undertaking as yet, but as far as he was able to judge, the general feeling of commercial men, manufacturers, and ship-owners was rather in favour of it, and he believed the lukewarmness hitherto displayed by the British Government was likely to be removed by the expression of feeling on the part of the country at large.

The PROVOST said he understood the feeling on the part of Government in regard to the scheme was a purely political one.

Mr. LANGE remarked that M. de Lesseps rather admired the position the British Government had taken in the matter, by delaying to give an opinion upon it till they saw the feeling of the country. In reply to Bailey Oswald, Mr. L. stated that the cargoes of vessels would be exempt from rate—the charge being levied on the tonnage of the vessel.

The LORD PROVOST then proposed the following motion, which was carried unanimously :—

“That this meeting having had the advantage of hearing the information and explanations afforded by M. de Lesseps and Mr. Lange, on the subject of the contemplated Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez, a subject which had previously engaged the attention of many of those now present, have to express their general concurrence in the views of the gentlemen who have thus addressed the meeting. The meeting desire to record their conviction that the design is one of the very utmost value to the shipping and commerce of Great Britain, and their belief that, according to the plan now submitted, it is quite practicable; and they beg to offer to M. de Lesseps their thanks for his visit, and an earnest desire for his success in his important mission.”

Mr. LANGE then thanked his Lordship for his kind attention to M. de Lesseps and himself, and also for the favourable resolution just passed.

A vote of thanks, moved to the Chairman by Mr. Thomson, banker, concluded the proceedings.

NEWCASTLE.

PUBLIC MEETING IN THE GUILDHALL.

(Extract from the "Newcastle Journal," May 30, 1857.)

The subject of the proposed Isthmus of Suez Ship Canal was introduced, in our last number, to the notice of the bankers, merchants, shipowners, and manufacturers of this town, by an announcement from Mons. Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French gentleman, to whom the Viceroy of Egypt has granted a charter empowering him to carry out the necessary arrangements for a junction of the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, by a canal navigable for the largest ships, and for the opening by this means of a safe maritime route to India, China, and Australia. In order to ascertain the feelings which exist in the financial and commercial classes of Newcastle with respect to this great enterprise, and personally to furnish full information as to its objects and details, M. de Lesseps, who had arrived in this town a day or two previously, met a numerous and influential body of the merchants, shipowners, and inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood, in the Guildhall, on Thursday last, among them being the Worshipful the Mayor of this town; E. N. Grace, Esq.; the Worshipful the Mayor of Gateshead; George Crawshay, Esq.; the Sheriff of Newcastle; Joseph Armstrong, Esq.; Robert Plummer, Esq.; W. H.

Brockett, Esq., Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce; C. M. Palmer, Esq.; M. Bourdillon, Vice-Consul of France; W. Weallens, Esq.; W. L. Harle, Esq.; W. R. Hunter, Esq.; Edward Glynn, Esq.; Benjamin Waters, Esq.; J. F. Ayton, Esq.; Mr. Ald. Glover, and A. S. Stevenson, Esq., of South Shields; R. S. Newall, Esq.; W. J. M. Lange, Esq.; Addison Potter, Esq.; Mr. Ald. Blackwell; John Jobling, Esq.; W. Daggett, Esq.; J. Browne, Esq.; Edward Mounsey, Esq.; W. Clapham, Esq.; M. Dunn, Esq.; B. Scott, Esq.; John Dobson, Esq.; James Morrison, Esq.; G. Ward, Esq.; A. Pring, Esq., &c. &c. M. de Lesseps received a most cordial reception. He was accompanied by David Adolphus Lange, Esq., a merchant of London, through whom he conveyed his views and explanations to the meeting.

The MAYOR of Newcastle, on opening the proceedings, expressed the great satisfaction with which he presided on so important an occasion, and called upon Mr. LANGE, who had been requested by M. de Lesseps to enter, on his part, into some details with respect to the proposed Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez.

MR. LANGE rose and said—The object of his visit was to elicit from them an expression of opinion with regard to the utility of the undertaking. M. de Lesseps had been commissioned by the Viceroy of Egypt to visit the different countries of Europe, for the purpose of ascertaining what was the commercial opinion with regard to the scheme, and the advantage to commerce likely to result from it. The feasibility of it had been ascertained beyond a doubt, and the official reports that they saw on the table stated the names of the engineers who went purposely to Egypt, and whose opinion pronounced upon the subject had removed all difficulty; and it only rested with M. de Lesseps to obtain from the different mercantile bodies expressions in favour of the undertaking. It was needless to tell them that the project embraced in its achievement most important results, in no small degree interesting Newcastle. It appeared that contracts for coal for Aden, Suez, Bombay, and other ports in India were made to arrive at fixed periods, and great inconvenience and loss were sustained by the uncertainty of arrival by the present route;

but the opening of the Ship Canal would remove those difficulties, and enable contracts to be fulfilled almost to a day. He should now enter into some details of the undertaking, which would be interesting to them, though that was quite foreign to the mission for which M. de Lesseps had come amongst them, which was simply to elicit their opinion as to the advantages of the scheme. But he thought it would be interesting to them to hear the length and depth and further particulars respecting the canal. (*Here the speaker entered into details of the plan, and repeated the financial statement.*)

They would see from this that the raising of the capital formed the least obstacle as regarded the completion of this great undertaking. The returns that they looked to were less from sailing vessels than from steamers. They had calculated in a great measure upon the rapid strides which steamers were making in proportion to the construction of sailing vessels. Although the canal would be useful for sailing vessels at certain periods of the year, still they had calculated chiefly upon screws and steamers. Sailing vessels could go through, if they chose, at the proper seasons; from April till the middle of September would be a favourable time for the outward voyage, and during the remaining part of the year for the voyage home; but some vessels, by seizing the proper season, might come and go the same way; but he thought it likely that sailing vessels going by the canal would return another way. It was, however, not an unimportant fact, that, according to the Board of Trade returns in 1854, the actual tonnage of vessels registered was 4,000,000 tons, and of steamers 300,000, equal to 13 to 1; and that in 1854 there were constructed 134,000 sailing ships and 64,000 steamers—the great disproportion of 2 to 1 being in favour of steamers. In the estimate they had calculated on an annual increase of tonnage of 100,000 tons. It appeared, however, that this was underrated, because in 1855 the increase in our foreign exports was 322,000 tons, and in the coasting trade 253,000 tons. But to supply the calculations so far as the returns of the canal were concerned, he might mention that the capital being £8,000,000, the interest upon that amount at the ordinary (not the present) rate of five per cent. would be £400,000. The expense of maintaining the canal would be £63,000. This expense had been taken very liberally, because the North Holland Canal, which was 48 miles long, cost only £16,000 per annum for keeping up. It appeared that two vessels of 2,500 tons each daily would pay nearly double the interest, and wear and tear. This was very important, because it simplified the matter, and showed clearly how few vessels would be required to make this canal pay. But another feature of very great importance

had lately been brought before the public, and it was one which concerned us very deeply. It appeared that our tenure in America for the supply of cotton was insecure, because, in proportion as we put down the traffic in slaves we diminished our chances of importing cotton from America. England consumed annually 900,000,000 lbs. of cotton, 700,000,000 lbs. of which was taken from America, so that we were nearly altogether dependent upon America for our supplies, and it had been felt, and very seriously felt, that such a tenure was one which ought to be altered if possible. It appeared that in India, the province of Candeish contained 5,000,000 acres of land suited to the growth of cotton, where irrigation could be easily introduced, and that this one province was capable of supplying the wants of all England put together. This fact seemed to have been sufficiently important to induce the Chamber of Commerce in Manchester to send Mr. Thomas Bazley, their president, to bring these arguments before a meeting in London. The Liverpool Chamber of Commerce had not been slow to follow the example, and the matter had taken such great dimensions, that, notwithstanding there was, he believed, generally a little rivalry between Liverpool and Manchester, the question was considered of such importance that this feeling was set aside; and he believed, at the present moment, they were effecting a fusion for the purpose of forming an association called the Cotton Supply Association. It was admitted on all hands that to compete successfully with America in the supply of cotton, we wanted regular communication with India. Hitherto, the communication with India had been very irregular, and this had been looked on as a great drawback. It was a great satisfaction to the projector of this undertaking to think that he should be unconsciously removing the great barrier which interposed between our trade and the trade of Europe and the East. The great difficulty which merchants would experience without the opening of the canal, would be the want of regularity. The canal once open, they would be able to carry out their views with perfect success. Another feature, of no small importance, was the great alteration which appeared likely to take place in our relations with China. European interference and management in that country would no doubt bring about results which it was at present almost impossible to foresee—results in their nature so great, that we could not at present form any conception of them. There could be no doubt that when China became a purchasing country as well as a selling country, we should have a difficulty in supplying the wants of all. Last year we imported from China goods to the value of about £9,000,000. We exported in British manu-

factures to China, including Hong Kong, only £2,000,000; therefore we took £7,000,000 per annum of goods more from them than we sent. But if the tables should afterwards change we should really find great difficulty in supplying the great demand from China, were it not that attention had been so fortunately drawn to this new province of Candeish, which would no doubt enable us to supply the wants of that very vast empire. But when we looked at the returns of the undertaking, and considered that this great province was situated just at that part where the canal would effect the greatest shortening of the route, viz., a shortening of 7,000 miles, the distance by the Cape of Good Hope being 14,000 miles to Candeish—it was highly important, and would, of course, create an enormous traffic through the canal—a traffic upon which we had never calculated; and, therefore, when gentlemen asked how they were going to make the canal pay, they could fully show that it would pay a very good dividend as the matter stood at present, but that it would pay a dividend much better than they ever anticipated when they came to see such a great development as was about to take place in China and in India. Also, with regard to the Australian trade, it would be a very great boon. Complaints were continually arriving from Australia of the want of regularity in our shipments. Goods were sent to be used in summer and arrived in the winter, and the reverse; and storage was so heavy that they did not admit of being warehoused, and therefore they were sold at any cost; hence they saw the fatal results which were continually arising from this want of regularity. They hoped the canal would remove all these difficulties and would confer a benefit and a boon upon the commerce, not only of England, but of the world generally. He thought he had said enough upon the subject, and for the present preferred having questions put, and answering some of the remarks that might be made by those who were much better able to judge of the advantages likely to accrue to commerce from this undertaking than he was himself. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. GLYNN asked what was the tonnage to be levied upon ships entering the canal?

Mr. LANGE said it would be ten francs per ton, which would include towing from one end to the other, and a saving of fifty francs per ton to India was very important. There were no locks. In further reply to Mr. Glynn, he said the depth of water through the canal would be 26 feet, and that in the opinion of one of the largest shipowners in England, Mr. Laird of Birkenhead, would be more than sufficient. Indeed, that gentleman considered 22 feet the greatest depth that would be required for general trade in all parts of the world. There was no important difference of level between the two seas; the im-

perceptible difference of two feet higher in the Red Sea was not worth mentioning. There was only five feet of tide in the Red Sea, and there was a very imperceptible current running at the rate of only two knots an hour, and it ran twelve and a-half miles, till it came into the Bitter Lakes, where it was neutralised.

Mr. STEVENSON—How much did Mr. Brunel expect the Great Eastern would draw?

Mr. LANGE—I believe twenty-eight feet, and at present they were not prepared for such large steamers; at the same time being lightened she might go through the canal; but the Great Eastern was an experiment, and rather in advance of the capabilities of the harbours at present constructed, and the canal must share its fate with other ports, and perhaps not have the advantage of the Great Eastern going through. There were very few harbours which she could get into. He believed Milford Haven, Queen's Town, Sydney, and Port Phillip, would be the only harbours which the Great Eastern could enter; and she could not come near to any quay. But there would be no difficulty in deepening the canal, because borings had been made to a depth of 50 feet, and there existed no rocks or anything which could prevent the canal being made to any depth, in order to meet the increased tonnage of vessels.

Mr. PLUMMER—You spoke of ten francs per ton; is that a uniform rate, or would there be a discriminating tonnage; and is the charge upon vessels only, or upon the cargoes of those vessels?

Mr. LANGE—I am sorry to say that Newcastle ships which go through laden with coals would have to pay the same tonnage as other ships with more valuable cargoes. It was the ship that paid, and all vessels would of course pay the same. The amount of tonnage was considered by other Chambers of Commerce as very limited; it was a maximum amount, and they could not exceed it. If found necessary afterwards, an alteration might be made to draw any particular trade to the canal, and if it should be found to press heavily upon vessels in the coal trade more than upon any others, the rate might be modified.

Mr. PLUMMER—Then I understand there will be power to make a discriminating tonnage?

Mr. LANGE—Not to raise, but to modify it.

Mr. HUNTER—Are we to understand that if a ship of 1,000 tons pays £400 as the amount of the dues, that would cover the dues upon the cargo?

Mr. LANGE—Precisely; and that is for the transit through the canal, and has nothing to do with the port charges for lights and other matters which are the same as in any other port; the ten francs is merely for the passage through the canal.

MR. WILSON—Do you think any sailing ships will go through the canal?

MR. LANGE—I think decidedly they will.

MR. WILSON—Why?

MR. LANGE—Because in certain periods of the year vessels going to Bombay and India will find a great saving by it.

MR. WILSON—Have you taken into account the saving in vessels going from here to India and Australia?

MR. LANGE—The saving would be, in going through the canal over going round the Cape, half the time.

MR. WILSON—Have you taken into consideration the passage up the Mediterranean?

MR. LANGE—Decidedly.

MR. WILSON—What would be the saving to a vessel going from here to Bombay?

MR. LANGE—If the wind were favourable, half the time and half the distance.

MR. WILSON—But vessels are sometimes subjected behind the rock of Gibraltar to serious detention.

MR. LANGE—There must necessarily be a detention at Gibraltar, and he had no doubt that to remedy this there would be a company started, independent of this to tow vessels through there. At the same time, in going from Alexandria to Bombay, if the proper time were chosen, they had a north-north-west wind, which would take them through the canal; they then had a side wind in the Red Sea, which would be favourable for the passage. But the difficulties of the passage through the Straits of Gibraltar could only be removed by towage, for which a company would probably be formed.

MR. PLUMMER—I am not quite clear that Mr. Lange understood one part of the question I put; it was this—whether in the concession granted to M. de Lesseps there is a power of forming a modified tariff, or that if a reduction takes place, it must be equal upon all vessels?

MR. LANGE—The reduction must be equal upon all vessels. Perhaps, with reference to the question, it would be satisfactory to read Art. 15, which says—"The company can in no case grant to any vessel, company, or individual a favour not accorded to all other vessels, companies, or individuals, under the same conditions."

MR. PLUMMER—There is rather an important passage in the end of that article—"under the same conditions." Now, a vessel loaded with one kind of cargo is not precisely in the same condition as a vessel loaded with another.

MR. LANGE—The word condition alludes, I suppose, to the rate of tonnage, as is shown by the previous article.

Mr. PLUMMER—I beg pardon for alluding so much to it; but you will perceive that if vessels loaded with the staple of this district are to pay 10*l.* a ton, and a vessel loaded with a cargo of tea pays the same, they are not on the same conditions with regard to the cargo, the one being a very valuable article, and the other of a lower price.

Mr. PALMER—The freightage of the ship may be the same.

Mr. PLUMMER—It may be so, but it is not likely.

Mr. PALMER—Oh, yes.

Mr. PLUMMER—For example, the different cargoes require a different class of vessel.

Mr. PALMER—The same ship that brings the tea home, takes the coal out.

Mr. PLUMMER—It would be highly desirable that the concession should be so altered, that the company, without granting any favouritism, should have a general power to modify the tariff.

Mr. LANGE—No doubt that was an important point, which would be duly considered by those who administer the affairs of the company. Of course there were details of which he could not speak definitively. It would rest with the company to arrange these matters, and the tariff would be framed with a regard to their own interests, and the interest of commerce generally; for, of course, as commerce was benefited through the canal, the company would be benefited; and, if a difficulty was found, he had no doubt the company would remove it. Mr. Plummer's question was a very important one, but he thought Mr. Palmer's reply showed that the difference was not so great as it at first appeared, and that the value of the cargo was not so great a point as the amount of freight; and, therefore, as the freight of the one was not so much greater than that of the other, the disproportion did not appear quite so great.

Mr. PALMER—And the usual course of trade is that the home freights are nearly double the foreign.

The MAYOR of Gateshead—I wish to point out to Mr. Palmer that it is not so much a question of freights as a tax upon the article that goes through. Now a tax, which might not affect the consumer of tea, or other valuable goods, might very materially affect the consumption of coal, and we are anxious here to have as good an export as possible.

M. LANGE—I can quite understand you to feel strongly on this point. At the same time, we are not prepared to enter upon the question of making a scale for different vessels. To meet your view we must tax the cargo, which would be very inquisitorial, very inconvenient, most difficult to arrive at, and which, in fact, could not be done. Still those views, though

very useful to us, appear to be rather premature, because they bear upon details which remain to be considered.

Mr. CRAWSHAY—The Custom House don't find any difficulty in taxing cargoes.

Mr. LANGE—But they have a great staff, and we want to economize as much as possible.

Mr. ROGERSON—Is it intended to put all nations on the same footing?

Mr. LANGE—It is.

Mr. ROGERSON—It is quite a free-trade canal then?

Mr. LANGE—Perfectly; it is a canal in which all nations may join, and participate equally in the benefit.

Mr. ROGERSON—Then how do you get the right of passage?

Mr. LANGE—As every nation will take a share, the property will be a universal one; every country will have an interest at stake, and will naturally protect that interest.

Mr. ROGERSON—But how do you make the passage neutral?

Mr. LANGE—That is by a concession granted by the Viceroy of Egypt to M. de Lesseps, and Article 14 particularly states that the canal shall always remain open as a neutral passage to any merchant ship crossing from one sea to another without any distinction or preference of person or nationalities, on payment of the dues and observing the regulations established by the company. That, I think, is fully understood.

The MAYOR inquired, in the course of the pause which ensued, whether there were any more questions to put, and no one responding,

The MAYOR of Gateshead rose, and said he thought the business had now arrived at that stage at which it was highly proper for them to adopt some resolutions in reference to the scheme. After the explanations they had heard from Mr. Lange, and after the great number of questions put to him—and which he had been very glad to hear put, and which no doubt M. de Lesseps had been glad to hear, as showing the interest excited in the minds of all present by this important subject—he said, after the answers given to those questions, it would be quite superfluous on his part to enter into the merits of the project. He would merely observe that it appeared to him that a look at the map was quite sufficient to satisfy any reasonable person of the importance of such a canal being made. They were aware that he had recently manifested interest in another project—a canal through the Isthmus of Panama. Now, it was not his belief that the one project interfered at all with the other, and every man anxious to see the world advance in prosperity would wish to see both made; but he did say this canal through the Isthmus of Suez was the one which ought to be made first, as that more particularly interested the people of England. A canal through

the Isthmus of Panama interested, he thought, the Americans in a greater degree than ourselves, although our interest was very great; but, than this canal, he could not imagine any project more essential to the commerce and prosperity of this country. (Applause.) He would just mention two distances. The distance from the English Channel to the Cape of Good Hope, and thence to Calcutta, by the route taken by the best sailing vessels, was, in round numbers, 13,000 miles; by the proposed canal it was only 8,000 miles. By the Cape of Good Hope to Bombay it was 11,500 miles; by the canal it would be 6,200 miles, or little more than one-half. He had no doubt that, by steamers, the passage would be performed in half the time. It appeared to him that nothing more need be said as to the importance of this project to England; but he would now say a few words as to the position in which it stood. The object of M. de Lesseps in coming here was not to obtain any material support or supplies of capital either from the English people or Government. His object was solely to obtain an expression of opinion on the project. The Viceroy of Egypt was anxious to know what was the opinion of the English people on this matter, and M. de Lesseps was visiting the more important towns in the country to get that expression of opinion. He had already been at some of the most important, and he had come here for the same reason, to lay the scheme before them and ask their opinion upon it. He hoped, by the expression of an opinion from the merchants and others interested in this matter, a similar expression might be obtained from the English Government, who had hitherto been silent upon the subject. All that was required for the immediate commencement of the project was an expression of goodwill from the English Government. Nothing more was required in order to enable M. de Lesseps to commence immediately. It had consequently been considered by some gentlemen who had the pleasure of meeting M. de Lesseps on Wednesday, on his going through the explanations that had been gone through now, that it would be desirable to adopt resolutions expressing their approval of the project, to embody those resolutions in a memorial to the Board of Trade, and to forward copies of that memorial to the borough members and other influential persons connected with the district, urging them to take the matter into consideration, and to urge its importance upon the Board of Trade, so as to obtain from that Board some expression of opinion upon the subject, either that they hold it desirable to support it, or if not, why not. He concluded by moving the following resolution:—

“That it would be most advantageous to the

whole world, and to this country more especially, if the present long and tedious route for shipping between India and Europe could be superseded. That it appears to this meeting that the project of a direct Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez is well calculated to furnish the required facility of communication, and to put an end to the delay, expense, and danger which are involved in the present line of communication round the Cape of Good Hope."

Mr. GILBERT WARD, of Blyth, seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. STEVENSON said the following resolution put into his hands was so much an axiom, that he was sure to discuss it would be a waste of time. It stated—

"That as it is most desirable that vessels should be enabled to proceed direct to and from India, without being obliged to discharge their cargoes at any intermediate station, it seems that the canal proposed by M. de Lesseps offers advantages to commerce very much greater than could be afforded by any railway."

Mr. J. JOBLING, in seconding the motion, said he believed the canal would be of great advantage to the world; and he was quite sure would be of material advantage to this country.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

Mr. PLUMMER said the resolution he had to submit to their notice was one which was in fact the keystone of the arch which had been formed by the preceding speakers, and the proceedings taken. It was that they consummate the work that they had already begun, namely, that they consent—

"That a memorial, embodying the foregoing resolutions, and recommending the project of M. de Lesseps to the favourable consideration of the Government, be signed by the Mayor, on behalf of this meeting; and that the members for this

borough, and for the borough of Gateshead, be requested to present the same to the Board of Trade, and to impress upon that department the urgent necessity for, and deep importance to this country, of the proposed canal; and that a copy of the memorial be forwarded to the Lord Lieutenant (Earl Grey), with a request that he will urge the prayer of the memorial upon the attention of the Board of Trade; and that all the members for the district be requested to support the memorial."

Now, he thought that, after the very conclusive proceedings which had taken place here to-day, no one could object to complete the work so well begun. He, therefore, submitted to their consideration this resolution put into his hands, and moved it, simply stating that he approved of the scheme entirely, conceiving that it would be of the greatest advantage, not only to England, but to this district, to have such a canal formed as M. de Lesseps proposed. (Loud applause.)

Mr. ROGERSON said he was very ready to vote for a resolution favourable to the formation of a canal, but he understood there were two, and inquired whether this was the neutral scheme, or that promoted by the French Government and objected to by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe at Constantinople?

The MAYOR of Gateshead explained that there was only one project, namely, the one before them, which would be open on the same terms to vessels of all nations, without preference to any, it having never entered into the intention of M. de Lesseps to give any advantage to his own country more than to any other.

Mr. LANGE was much obliged to Mr. Crawshay; and said that M. de Lesseps, instead of complaining, rather praised the Government for its patriotism in withholding its expression of opinion till they had the opportunity of showing them how well the different bodies—the Chambers of Commerce, and other influential commercial bodies—appreciated the undertaking. The resolution passed to-day made the thirteenth in their favour, and he had no doubt that, when the Government knew this, they would remove any opposition they might have entertained. But he believed the object of the Government was merely to keep aloof from giving an opinion till they had ascertained what the different mercantile classes thought about the matter.

Mr. ROGERSON—Then this undertaking is not connected with the French Government?

Mr. LANGE—I distinctly stated to you that M. de Lesseps is not in any way connected with the French Government, but is merely empowered by the Viceroy of Egypt to get this expression of opinion, and has nothing at all to do with the French Government. (Applause.)

Mr. ROGERSON expressed his satisfaction with this explanation, and seconded the resolution, which was unanimously carried.

Mr. W. LOCKEY HARLE said he had much pleasure in moving a vote of thanks to the distinguished gentlemen who had come among them to draw their attention to this very noble scheme. He felt exceedingly obliged personally, as they all were, to M. de Lesseps for coming here this day, and thanks were due to him for the admirable manner in which the matter had been laid before them. It was clear that it was a very great scheme, and would be of great advantage to the whole civilized world. He trusted there would be no national jealousy in this matter; and the best proof that no such thing existed as that to which Mr. Rogerson alluded, was in the fact that they had this gentleman coming here—a gentleman of science and knowledge—and laying his views before the public of this country, and asking them to co-operate with him, not so much in point of capital as in point of opinion. He had very great pleasure in moving the vote of thanks to M. de Lesseps, and he wished his very excellent friend (he was going to call him fellow-townsmen) Mr. Lange, included in the vote; and he trusted that he would long co-operate with M. de Lesseps in carrying out this great scheme. (Loud applause.)

Mr. GLYNN seconded the resolution, and in doing so remarked that his friend Mr. Harle had anticipated what he was about to say in reference to his friend Mr. Lange. He thought that not the least evidence of good in this undertaking was that Mr. Lange had been tempted to leave the peaceful path of commerce, and to appear before them to-day in a character which rather belonged to his (the legal) profession than his own. (Applause.) He thought the advantage of this project might be put before them in a single phrase. It was—"That, as Mr. Waghorn opened the Overland route to India for passengers, M. de Lesseps would open the Overland passage for goods." (Applause.) And when they considered the difficulties which Mr. Waghorn encountered, from the year 1839 to the year when it was successfully carried into execution, and when they considered the opposition, the indifference, and the neglect with which his efforts were met, it must be a matter of great satisfaction to them, and a pledge for the future success of the

undertaking, that the project came under the high auspices of M. de Lesseps. M. de Lesseps had, in his own person, been a most active and zealous labourer in this cause; and if they succeeded in obtaining this canal, which would so greatly shorten the passage to India, they would be indebted to M. de Lesseps for it, as they were indebted to Mr. Waghorn for the passenger route.

The vote was carried with much applause.

Mr. LANGE said that M. de Lesseps (who was not able to converse fluently in the English language) and himself felt deeply grateful for the manner in which the subject had been received, for the deep interest they had felt in it, and for the very important and encouraging resolutions which they had passed, and which were perhaps more important than any hitherto received. M. de Lesseps, he was sure, would long retain a pleasant recollection of this day; coming a stranger amongst them he was deeply thankful for their kindness. He concluded by proposing a vote of thanks to the Mayor for his able presidency, and his very valuable assistance in the cause.

M. de Lesseps seconded the resolution, which was carried by acclamation, and briefly acknowledged by the Mayor, who observed that he had derived great pleasure in attending on this occasion. The meeting then separated.



H U L L.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

(Extract from the "Hull Advertiser," June 6, 1857.)

On Saturday last, at noon, the Hull Chamber of Commerce held a meeting on Change for the purpose of hearing explanations from M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, relative to the projected canal through the Isthmus of Suez. H. S. HASSELL, Esq., President of the Chamber, was in the chair, and the meeting was numerously attended. Amongst those present we noticed Mr. J. W. Pease, Mr. Norwood, Mr. H. S. Bright, Mr. C. C. Brochner, Mr. Sykes, Mr. G. G. Kemp, Mr. C. Good, Mr. T. F. Hewitt, Mr. E. F. Collins, Mr. M. Keighley, Mr. W. Stephenson, Mr. T. Thompson, Mr. Ringrose, Mr. Young, Mr. J. S. Thompson, Mr. Peterson, Mr. Depledge, Mr. Tall, Mr. Cattley, Mr. Morley, Mr. Moxon, Mr. Whittaker, Mr. Flint, Mr. Hibbersty, Mr. Gill, &c.

The CHAIRMAN said that on the previous day he had been called upon by M. de Lesseps, with a request that he might be allowed to address the members of the Chamber of Commerce on the project which he was engaged in furthering for effecting a communication between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, by means of a canal. Knowing that M. de Lesseps had visited

so many parts of England, and had been received with willingness, and his plans on each occasion approved, he (the chairman) had no hesitation, without consulting the directors, for which there was no time, in calling the Chamber together. He should not enter into particulars, but simply request Mr. Lange, who would speak for M. de Lesseps, to proceed with his explanations.

Mr. D. A. LANGE said—M. de Lesseps has requested me on his part to enter into some details with respect to the proposed Canal across the Isthmus of Suez. The object of his visit is to elicit from you an expression of opinion with regard to the utility of the undertaking. He has been commissioned by the Viceroy to visit the different countries in Europe for the purpose of ascertaining what is the commercial opinion with regard to the utility of his undertaking, and of the advantages to commerce likely to result from it. The feasibility has been ascertained beyond a doubt, and the official reports that you see on the table state the names of the engineers who went purposely to Egypt, and who have pronounced their opinion upon the subject, and have removed all difficulties; and it only rests with M. de Lesseps to obtain, from the different mercantile bodies, expressions in favour of the undertaking. The returns that we look to are less from sailing vessels than from steamers. We have calculated in a great measure upon the rapid strides which steamers are making in proportion to the construction of sailing vessels. Although the canal will be useful for sailing vessels at certain periods of the year, still we have calculated mainly upon screws and steamers. Sailing vessels can go through if they choose at the proper seasons; from April to the middle of September the wind blows one way, and the other six months the other way, and during the remaining part of the year for the voyage home; but some vessels by seizing the proper season, might come and go the same way. But to supply the calculations so far as the returns of the canal are concerned, I may mention that the capital being £8,000,000, the interest upon that amount at the ordinary rate of five per cent. will be £400,000. The expense of maintaining the canal will be £63,000. This expense has been taken very liberally, because the canal of North Holland, which canal is 48 miles long, costs £16,000 per annum for keeping up. It is intended to charge 10f. a ton for vessels passing through the canal. That is the maximum the company can charge, and it includes towage. It appears that if two vessels of 2,500 tons each pass through the canal each day it will pay nearly double the interest and wear and tear. This is very important, because it simplifies the matter, and shows clearly how many vessels will be required to make this canal pay. But another feature of very great importance has lately

been brought before the public, and it is one which concerns us very deeply. It appears that our tenure in America for the supply of cotton is insecure, because in proportion as we put down the traffic in slaves, we diminish our chances of importing cotton from America. England consumes annually 900,000,000 of pounds weight of cotton. 700,000,000 pounds are taken from America, so that we are nearly altogether dependent upon America for our supplies, and it has been felt, and seriously felt, that such a tenure is one which ought to be altered if possible. It appears that, in India, the province of Candeish contains 5,000,000 of acres of land suited to the growth of cotton, where irrigation can be easily introduced, and that this one province is capable of supplying the wants of all England put together.

This fact seems to have been sufficiently important to induce the Chamber of Commerce, in Manchester, to send Mr. Thomas Bazley, their president, to bring these arguments before a meeting London. The Liverpool Chamber of Commerce has not been slow to follow the example, and the matter has taken such great dimensions that, notwithstanding there is, I believe, generally a little rivalry between Liverpool and Manchester, the question was considered of such importance that this idea was set aside, and, I believe, at the present moment they are effecting a fusion for the purpose of forming an association called the Cotton Supply Association. It is admitted on all hands that to compete successfully with America in the supply of cotton, we want regular communication with India. Hitherto the communication with India has been very irregular, and this has been looked upon as a great drawback. It is a great satisfaction to the promoter of this undertaking to think that he shall unconsciously be removing the great barrier which interposes between our trade and the trade of Europe and the East. The great difficulty which all these great bodies would experience, without the opening of the canal, would have been the want of regularity. The canal once open, they will be able to carry out their views with perfect success. Another feature of no small importance is the great alteration which appears likely to take place in our relations with China. European interference and management in that country will, no doubt, bring about results which it is at present almost impossible to foresee—results in their nature so great that we cannot at present form any conception of them. There can be no doubt that when China becomes a purchasing country as well as a selling one, we shall have difficulty in supplying the wants of all. Last year we imported from China goods to the value of about £9,000,000 sterling. We exported, in British manufactures to China, including Hong Kong, only £2,000,000; therefore we take £7,000,000 per annum of goods

more from them than we send. But if the tables should afterwards change, we should really find great difficulty in supplying the great demand from China, were it not that attention has been so fortunately drawn to this new province of Candeish, which will no doubt enable us to supply the wants of that very vast empire. But when we look at the returns of the undertaking, and consider that this great province is situated just at that part where the canal will effect the greatest shortening—viz., it will effect a shortening of 7,000 miles, the distance by the Cape of Good Hope being 14,000 miles to Candeish—it is highly important, and will, of course, create an enormous traffic through the canal—a traffic upon which we have never calculated; and therefore when gentlemen ask how we are going to make the canal pay, we can fully show that it will pay a very good dividend as the matter stands at present; but that it will pay a dividend much better than we ever anticipated when we come to see such a great development as is about to take place in China and in India. Also, with regard to the Australian trade, it will be a very great boon. Complaints are continually arriving from Australia of the want of regularity in our shipments. Goods are sent to be used in summer and arrive in winter, and the reverse. Storage is so heavy that they don't admit of being warehoused, and therefore they are sold at any cost. Hence we see the fatal results which are continually arising from this want of regularity. We hope the canal will remove all these difficulties, and will confer a benefit and a boon upon the commerce, not only of England, but of the world generally. Having made these remarks to you, who are much better able to judge of the advantages likely to accrue to commerce from this undertaking than I am myself, I would merely submit these remarks as suggestions to you, to show the advantages of the undertaking.

In reply to Mr. NORWOOD,

Mr. LANGE said the draught of water all through the canal would be 26 feet. Mr. LAIRD, of Birkenhead, one of the largest shipbuilders in England, had given him some information on the subject of the tendency as to draught of water in the construction of vessels, and with the view to ascertain whether 26 feet would be sufficient for all useful purposes; and Mr. LAIRD said he had built the Nubia and the Alma—each 2,350 tons and 500 horsepower—that they drew 20 feet of water; but that the directors of the company for whom he built them told him they would prefer, in future, that the depth should not exceed 18 feet; and Mr. LAIRD considered 22 feet the greatest depth that any vessel need have for general trade to all parts of the world. It was very satisfactory to them that they had decided upon a depth which was considered sufficient for all purposes. There was no

difference of level between the seas. A rise of 2 feet in the level of the Red Sea was not, of course, as he need not tell them, worth mentioning. The tide only rose to 5 feet.

Mr. NORWOOD asked whether that depth would admit of large war steamers passing through?

Mr. LANGE said it happened that he had had an interview with Captain Washington, the hydrographer to the Admiralty, or rather he had shared in a conversation with him. Captain Washington had informed him that an old 80 gun ship of 3,000 tons, with all her stores aboard, would draw 27 feet. Now, the ships they were building were larger, but were not to draw more than 24 feet. But if the canal was found not to be deep enough, they could easily deepen it. There was nothing to prevent it.

Several other questions were asked, and opinions expressed that the charge should not be one on tonnage, but on the value of the goods, as a cargo of great value would derive more advantage from expedition than one of less value.

Mr. KEIGHLEY then moved the following resolution :—

“That M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, having detailed the object of his proposed plan of a canal through the Isthmus of Suez with a view to obtaining the opinion of the mercantile community, as to the utility of a direct communication between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, this meeting is perfectly satisfied that the advantages of such a communication would be great, and very beneficial to the whole of the trading interest, and merits the support not only of the mercantile classes but of the individual governments of the civilized world.”

He had great pleasure in moving this resolution. The subject was one of the utmost importance to this country, and if the project were carried out it must have the effect of extending the commerce of the Eastern world, and doubtless lead to very important results. In connexion with the canal, he would suggest that some steps should be taken to help vessels through the Straits of Gibraltar. At present, a continuance of westerly winds often detained vessels there for several weeks, and he very much wondered that some company or other did not put on steamers to tow the vessels through the Straits. He most sincerely wished success to the proposed canal, and was thankful to M. de Lesseps for his explanations.

Mr. NORWOOD seconded the motion.

Mr. KEIGHLEY would just say that he thought it very desirable that the canal should be made a greater depth. The Great Eastern had been spoken of; and it was probable that if she was successful other vessels of similar magnitude might be built.

Mr. LANGE—We shall bear it in mind.

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

Mr. C. GOOD moved the next resolution, which was seconded by Mr. H. S. BRIGHT, and carried. It was as follows :—

“That the details of M. de Lesseps’ plans, supported as they are by the approval of many of the most eminent civil engineers of Europe, give every confidence that the project can be carried out with security and advantage.”

Mr. BROCHNER moved, and Mr. KEMP seconded the following resolution, which was carried without a dissident :—

“That the thanks of this meeting be given to M. de Lesseps and Mr. Lange, for the information which they have imparted to this meeting on a subject of such general interest ; and that copies of these resolutions be handed to M. de Lesseps, and also to the members of Parliament for this borough, for presentation to the Board of Trade.”

Mr. LANGE, on behalf of M. de Lesseps, thanked the meeting, and the proceedings terminated.

BIRMINGHAM.

THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

(*Extract from the "Birmingham Journal," June 6, 1857.*)

A meeting of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce was held at the Waterloo Rooms on Wednesday, to hear the explanations of M. Ferdinand de Lesseps relative to the proposed Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez, that gentleman being the *concessionaire* to whom the Viceroy of Egypt has entrusted the formation of a company for the carrying out of this splendid project. Being unable to express himself in English with sufficient fluency, M. de Lesseps was accompanied by a friend, an eminent London merchant, D. A. Lange, Esq. In the unexpected absence of Richard Spooner, Esq., M.P., President of the Chamber, the chair was occupied by J. D. GOODMAN, Esq. Amongst the gentlemen present were Henry Van Wart, Esq.; S. S. Lloyd, Esq.; Edward Gem, Esq.; Alderman Lloyd; Alderman Holliday; Alderman Sturge; Mr. C. L. Browning; Mr. G. A. Everitt (Belgian Consul); Mr. W. R. Lloyd; Mr. J. S. Wright; Mr. C. L. Browett; Mr. H. Weiss; Mr. John Harper, jun. (Willenhall); Mr. Manton; Mr. Dudley; Mr. Collis; Mr. Pearson; Mr. Lee; Mr. Wade; Mr. Perry, &c.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, conveyed to the Chamber the regret of Mr. Spooner that he was unable to be present, which he had fully intended, and went on to remark that all must admit that the shortening of the route between Great

Britain and our Indian possessions by 5,000 miles must be an object of the deepest importance to commercial men. (Hear.) M. de Lesseps was the commissioner appointed by the Viceroy of Egypt to lay the scheme before the mercantile men of Europe, and he (the Chairman) might take that opportunity of stating that the undertaking was perfectly independent of the French Government, though many had supposed to the contrary. M. de Lesseps appeared before them simply in the interest of the Viceroy, who was desirous of obtaining an expression of opinion regarding it from the mercantile men of this country. He would now call upon Mr. Lange to address the Chamber.

Mr. LANGE then said—Gentlemen, your vice-president has already laid before you, in a lucid manner, the object of M. de Lesseps's visit among you. It is for the purpose of eliciting an expression of public opinion with regard to the utility of the project which he now begs to submit to your notice. The concession to form the canal has been granted to M. de Lesseps by the Viceroy of Egypt, and for the last two years every possible exertion has been made to ascertain the feasibility of the undertaking. With this view, the most eminent engineers from different parts of Europe were collected together, and went to Egypt for the purpose of making the necessary scientific enquiries on the spot. The result of this very important research is comprised in a book now lying on the table before you, and called the official report of the engineers. The names of all the engineers are there stated, and you will see by those names that the practicability of the undertaking has been set beyond all doubt. The next wish of the Viceroy expressed to M. de Lesseps was, having ascertained that the thing could be done, to elicit from the different mercantile and municipal bodies in different parts of England and other countries, an expression of opinion with regard to the utility of the scheme and the advantages likely to accrue to commerce from its being carried out. It was necessary to obtain this expression of opinion before commencing the undertaking, and for this reason M. de Lesseps has come among you. I shall now give you a short and concise detail of the canal itself, the nature of the country through which it is to be made, and such other facts as I think will not be uninteresting to you. (*Here the speaker entered into details of the plan.*) I think that, without troubling you with further details respecting the project, I may as well enter into some few suggestions with regard to the advantages likely to accrue to commerce in general from its execution. At the same time it is no easy matter to indicate the likely results of a scheme which will bring into close contact a population of 300,000,000 on the west, and a population of 600,000,000 on the east side of our globe—

a scheme which will, by 5,000 miles, shorten the distance between the two, and which will increase the regularity of our trade, and develop the resources of all the countries bordering on the grand route to India. The beneficial effects of the Overland route have been shown by an advance in wealth and civilization during the last twelve or thirteen years; and, if the Overland route has shown such results, we must naturally inquire, with a great deal of curiosity, what must be the result likely to accrue from the opening of a Grand Maritime Canal, through which vessels can pass without impediment or delay, thus shortening the distance from England to Bombay 7,000 miles, or half the length, the distance by the present route being 14,000 miles. The dangers of the Cape route are universally admitted; whereas, whatever the prejudices might be which once existed as to the Red Sea route, it has been proved beyond all doubt that this is a very quiet and safe sea. It is needless for me to adduce facts in support of my statement, as most of the gentlemen in the room must be more conversant with these matters than myself. At the same time I may mention that the Peninsular and Oriental Company, fearing the dangers of the Red Sea when they commenced operations, set aside a portion of their capital to provide for contingencies. This fund has never been used, because they have never had a single accident in the Red Sea. Independent of that, I may mention that Captain Harris, formerly in the Engineers, and who made no less than seventy voyages up and down the Red Sea, gives a most favourable and satisfactory report respecting its safety. On the other hand, you all know that the Cape route is dangerous; but it is not a matter of choice; there is no other route; and therefore vessels are compelled to take that circuitous voyage, notwithstanding all the drawbacks. The great drawback of the Cape route is a want of coaling stations; they are few and far between. This has no doubt originated the idea of the auxiliary screw; and, however inefficient, this is at present the only practical solution of the difficulty, unless we go to the other extreme, by constructing such monster ships as the Great Eastern. Indeed, as Mr. Brunel admitted, the only object which led him to construct this vessel was no other than the desirability of having one sufficiently large to carry coals for the voyage out and home. Now, though the Great Eastern may be a great boon to commerce, by ensuring a quick and certain voyage, it will take some time to carry out the scheme, and shipowners will not find it very convenient to build vessels in order to compete with this monopolising monster. The canal, however, would in no small degree tend to maintain the ordinary class of shipping in that position which it would be in danger of losing if the Great

Eastern experiment should prove successful. [Hear, hear.] Although the existing route round the Cape prevents the full development of our steam resources, nevertheless the urgent necessity of steam will manifest itself, as it has already manifested itself, as compared with sailing vessels. According to official returns from the Board of Trade, it appears that in one year the actual tonnage of vessels registered was 4,000,000 tons, and of steamers 300,000; but in the same year were constructed 134,000 tons of shipping, and 64,900 tons of steamers, showing a great disproportion in favour of steamers. Now the advantage of the canal route will be that there will be coaling stations at Gibraltar, Malta, Port Said, Suez, and Aden. M de Lesseps desires me to add Perim which has lately been annexed to our possessions, and very judiciously so, as being on the other side of Aden, a key to this great opening. M. de Lesseps also wishes me to mention here that the very circumstance of no opposition being shown by any Government to our annexation of Perim, shows the good feeling which exists, and how little jealous they are of the power which such an annexation will give England. I shall now revert for a moment or two to the development which our China and India trade will probably undergo, and the advantages likely to accrue to the canal from that development. At a meeting lately held in London, Mr. Smith, the member for Stockport, in the chair, the great importance of giving attention to the cotton trade in India was suggested. It was there shown that our annual consumption of cotton was 900,000,000 of pounds; that we take 700,000,000 of this supply from America, that our tenure of the supply of cotton from America is insecure; and that, therefore, it was of great importance attention should be directed to the old province of Candeish, which contains no less than 5,000,000 of acres of land fit for growing cotton, of which land only four per cent. is used, the remaining eighty-six per cent. lying waste. To accomplish this it will be necessary to enter into some arrangement with the East India Company, and when this is done no time will be lost in irrigating these lands and taking the necessary steps for bringing them into cultivation. It is fortunate that the attention of England should have been directed to this great province at the present time, because with the likely results of our interference and management in China, it is impossible to foresee what the ultimate effect may be. At present we receive from China £9,000,000 worth of merchandize per annum, and we export to China only £2,000,000 per annum, so that we take £7,000,000 more from her than she takes from us. But assuming that by coming in closer contact with them, we should manage their affairs—the only solution of China's ulti-

mate development—and that they become buyers of our manufactures to a larger extent than they have hitherto been, we really should have been placed in a difficult position had we not directed attention to Candeish, because from America alone it would have been impossible to find sufficient for our own country and China also. I adduce these facts to show that in the likely event of our trade with India and China increasing, this must necessarily have the most beneficial effect upon the financial results of the canal—these results and the boon the canal confers upon commerce being inseparable, seeing that as the one is benefited the other is also. Another point you will all be naturally anxious to know. What returns do we calculate on receiving from the canal? I shall endeavour to show you this as briefly as possible. The expense of making the canal is estimated at £8,000,000 sterling, which includes £1,500,000 for interest while the works are going on, and for ulterior expenses. If we take the usual interest, five per cent., the amount payable to shareholders would be £400,000 annually. According to the official report of the engineers, it is estimated that the very outside cost of keeping up the canal would be £63,000 per annum; and when we consider that the cost of the North Holland Canal—which is 48 miles long, ours being 93—is £16,000 per annum only, certainly £63,000 for ours does seem an ample estimate. This would make an annual expenditure of £463,000. I would, however, add, that an average of two ships per day, each 2,500 tons burthen, would yield nearly £800,000 per annum, and that while these two ships per day only represent an annual tonnage of 1,800,000 tons, the actual tonnage that goes round the Cape from all parts of Europe is 3,000,000. If this canal were open at present, we estimate that we should have 2,000,000 of this traffic. But according to the Board of Trade returns, it appears that the annual increase in foreign shipping is 322,000 tons, so that by the time the canal is formed, six years hence, the total increase would alone amount to 2,000,000 tons, and the probability is that we should have 4,000,000 of tons going through the canal instead of 2,000,000. I think I have shown you enough to prove, as far as we can possibly see, that the likely returns of the canal will be great. I have purposely abstained from entering into too many particulars, and have left unmentioned one very important circumstance—the opening of the trade with Africa, Abyssinia, and the borders of the Red Sea. Having said this much, I shall be happy to answer any questions which may have suggested themselves to gentlemen present in the course of my remarks.

Alderman HOLLIDAY—A good deal has been said as to the

advantage of the scheme, but I have heard nothing with respect to the tonnage to be charged upon the ships—a very important matter.

The CHAIRMAN—A maximum of 10 francs per ton was mentioned.

Mr. BROWNING—What proportion will that bear to the present cost?

Mr. LANGE—It will be a saving of 50 francs a ton.

The CHAIRMAN—The 10 francs per ton includes the expense of towing the vessels through the canal. It is, moreover, a maximum charge, to which the company is limited. They will have power to modify this charge of 10 francs; but it must be in a downward direction.

Mr. W. R. LLOYD—As we are ignorant of the preliminary measures taken in this affair, will you excuse me asking how it is intended to raise the funds for this undertaking?

Mr. LANGE—Your question is one of great importance, and I am glad you have put it. The concession granted to M. de Lesseps by the Viceroy of Egypt, was to enable him to form a Universal Company, in which all countries could join. The capital has already nearly all been reserved, in the following proportions:—(*Financial details already given.*) It was necessary, as I told you before, that a branch canal should be made, at a cost of 9,000,000 of francs. This the Viceroy has done at his own expense; and whatever expense he may have been at would, naturally, when the company is formed, be refunded at the cost price of what is paid for forming this canal. The plan adopted for bringing this company before the public was very different to that generally adopted in France and England; but I think you will agree with me in regarding the providing of the preliminary expenses by the Viceroy as very satisfactory, seeing that thereby nothing was left doubtful. All this having been done, the last step is to ascertain your opinion as to the advantages likely to accrue to commerce in general.

Mr. W. R. LLOYD—Is it intended to enlist us as subscribers to the concern, or have you already obtained the support of the capitalists?

Mr. LANGE—If you were ever so anxious to put down £1,000,000 to-day, we should not be in a position to reserve shares for you, because it is not our object to come among you for money at present. We simply wish an expression of opinion, and do not wish you to join financially in any way now. I believe it will be eagerly seized upon by the capitalists when the proper time comes.

Mr. S. S. LLOYD—I should like you to give us a short estimate of the way in which you calculate a saving. Take a

ship of 1,000 tons, coming from Sydney or Bombay, the dead outlay of which for coming through the canal would be about £400 at 10 francs per ton.

Mr. EVERITT—Is there any difference of charge, according to whether a cargo be coal or tea?

Mr. LANGE—Coal would pay the same as the most valuable cargo of tea or sugar; but this would only affect the freight; and after all, the freight upon coal and very valuable cargoes does not differ so very much. The actual cargo has nothing to do with the toll, as it is not the merchandise that is taxed, but the registered tonnage. But these are details which would be reconsidered when the administration has been formed.

The CHAIRMAN—The question is a very important one, and we can bring it home nearer to ourselves, if we ask it with respect to iron. Iron does pay a very different freight to that paid by light goods. It is also frequently required by ships for ballast, and on that account they are glad to get it cheaply. A charge of 10 francs per ton would considerably increase the cost. I think the freight to India is now 30s. per ton.

Mr. LANGE—Sometimes iron is carried in the shape of ballast. However, though I cannot express an individual opinion on the subject, I feel strongly that the remarks you have made are of very great importance. As a merchant, I think it of great importance that all sorts of cargoes should be equally taxed, as it would be an unfortunate thing to place one article on a different footing from another. Still, as I said before, everything should be done to put all articles on a fair footing. This is a subject about which I have had some conversation with M. de Lesseps; and he states that though it was not in the concession, it was a matter which should have his attention, being one of those points which are only evolved by coming into contact with practical men such as he has met in England; and by listening to the opinions given at important meetings like this, where questions are put which frequently give us more information than we impart, we elicit suggestions which are of great service to us, and will enable us, when the administration is formed, to make such a code as would benefit all nations, and act fairly to all interests. We have already been in Liverpool, Manchester, Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Newcastle, and Hull; and we have received, from the most important Chambers of Commerce, and municipal bodies, no less than eighteen resolutions, expressing themselves highly in favour of the project; some of them urging us to allow them to send deputations to London for the purpose of pressing upon the Board of Trade the necessity of co-operating in every possible way to bring about its execution. M. de Lesseps wishes me to remark that in the event of the opening of the

Isthmus of Panama having been accomplished, it was intended to have charged a toll of 15 francs per ton.

The CHAIRMAN—Of course it would be to the interest of the company themselves not to have rates of toll so high as to defeat their object. (Hear, hear.)

Alderman LLOYD—It should be recollected that in going to India or Australia you have westerly winds the moment you arrive at the Cape, so that the wind may make the distance beyond very short indeed. As regards Birmingham articles generally, the freight of which ranges from 28s. to 35s. per ton, a tax of ten francs would be very great, and would probably cause the longer route to be preferred. Our goods are generally of a cheap class, upon which a few weeks' delay would be no consequence. At present the voyage from the Cape of Good Hope to Australia is only about thirty-five days, so that the chief saving to be effected would be from here to the Cape of Good Hope; but from my knowledge of the winds prevalent betwixt here and Suez, the voyage to Suez would be nearly as long as from here to the Cape.

Mr. LANGE—The suggestions made are very important, as they prove to us the necessity of being very particular how we fix definitely upon the amount of toll to be levied. Our object will of course be to attract as much shipping through the canal as we possibly can, and of course we should not be consulting our own interests, and much less those of commerce in general, if we were not to adapt ourselves to the necessity of every manufacturing and commercial interest. I must mention, however, that we have not come here merely for the purpose of eliciting an expression of individual opinion with regard to the beneficial effects which this canal would have upon your own town, but as to its effect on commerce generally.

Mr. BROWETT—Can you inform us what time this route will save?

Mr. LANGE—In the estimate of returns we have calculated more upon steamers than sailing vessels; but I will state what our prospects are in regard to the latter. The north-north-west winds, which blow from April to September, are favourable for the voyage out to India. As I have already said, they will save 7,000 miles, or half the distance, going to Bombay, and from Aden to Bombay is a voyage for a sailing vessel of eight days. Many have done it in seven days. The voyage home can be made with a favourable wind from September to April, or if the vessel leaves England in August, she will have a favourable wind out and home. So the owners of sailing vessels must not suppose that they will not largely share in the advantages derived from the cutting of the canal. (Hear.) As to steamers, the saving of distance could not avoid being a saving of time.

A steamer to Bombay, for instance, would go in one-half the time, as there would be no detention, and the number of coaling stations would enable steamers to use steam to a greater extent than at present, thus increasing the number and furnishing a great means of accelerating a regular trade.

Alderman STURGE said, that, as screw steamers seem likely to do away with sailing vessels, he thought they might fairly reckon a saving of distance as an actual saving of time. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. LANGE was gratified to hear such an opinion from so eminent an authority, and felt convinced it would be fully appreciated by the commercial classes.

Mr. S. S. LLOYD said it was not so much a question of saving distance about which they were in doubt, as of how much longer a ship would be in going round by the Cape than by going through this canal. With a westerly wind, for instance, a clipper ship would, after passing the Cape, go much faster than the rate at which she would be dragged through the Suez canal. There was another point to which he wished to call attention. It was well known that the English Ambassador at Constantinople, for reasons best known to himself, was a violent opponent to the scheme. He didn't pin his faith to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, though he supposed he studied the interests of the country; but he should like to know what was the reason he opposed it, especially as with fortresses like Malta and Aden at each end of the canal, England would seem to have strong reasons for supporting the project. Was it or was it not the fact that a railway scheme had been proposed, and was preferred by Lord Stratford to this canal?

Mr. LANGE—With regard to the question put as to the toll, I may remark that instead of being considered high, the charge of ten francs is considered low. At Liverpool and Manchester it was said that if we did not charge more than ten francs a ton, it would be a great boon to commerce. Still, it must be remembered, that we can modify it. At page 93, of the book before you, you will find a calculation as to the saving of time; but it really requires no elaborate reasoning to show that if you cut the route to Bombay 7,000 miles shorter, you must effect a great saving in interest of capital invested in the ship, in insurance of ship, in wear and tear of ship, in the diminution of pay, in the cost of provisions, in the insurance of freight, and in interest on capital invested in cargo. When we tell you that the saving is about £2 per ton, or fifty francs, you will admit that we are far from over-estimating the reality. Of course it is very difficult to make exact calculations, but it seems clear to demonstration that a shortening of the distance must necessarily secure not only great reduction of time but also of expense.

As to the opposition made by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe at Constantinople, the circumstances are these:—The Viceroy granted to M. de Lesseps a concession to form the company for making the canal, and out of courtesy to the Sultan, wished to have the Sultan's ratification to this concession. The Sultan was favourable to the project, and anxious to ratify the concession. M. de Lesseps wrote a letter to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, mentioning what he had done in Egypt; but to his surprise he found that the whole project was received by his Lordship rather coldly, and that by some unexplained means, the Sultan was influenced to withhold his consent to the ratification of this concession. That is all the opposition that has been hitherto met with. From official quarters no overt act of opposition has been publicly shown, and if you, gentlemen, wish for the formation of this canal, if you see in it great advantages likely to accrue to commerce, you could not render the cause a greater service than by pressing upon your own members the necessity of bringing these matters before the Board of Trade, and asking why the consent of the Sultan, already given, was so influenced by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe? (Hear.)

The CHAIRMAN—I think we should bear in mind that we are not invited to take shares in the canal, and I do not think it is for us to call in question, or indeed estimate, the correctness of the calculations that have been made. I think the question put before us is this: If the canal were made, would it be a benefit to trade and commerce?

Mr. BROWNING—If it could be used profitably. In the event of the ten francs being more than you wanted, is there any possibility of reducing it to a lower sum?

Mr. LANGE—To ask us why we did certain things, seems almost foreign to the question before you. If you asked us why we fixed upon ten francs, or this, that, or the other, we must refer back to the notes or minutes by which these things have been arrived at step by step. We cannot exceed ten francs, and of course that charge will be modified if we find it presses too heavily upon a single article. We naturally shall be anxious to induce ships to go through the canal. If we find they prefer the Cape route, then the earliest opportunity would be taken to remedy any difficulty which would occasion this diversion from the route we want to establish.

Alderman HOLLIDAY asked if the company undertaking to form this canal had limited their dividend to the specific amount, and said he thought the question how they arrived at the amount to be charged was a fair question. On cotton, for instance, the toll amounted to one farthing a pound, while all knew how an eighth or a sixteenth of a penny in the pound was a large profit.

BIRMINGHAM.

Mr. LANGE said that instead of being a farthing on the pound, ten francs per ton would come to about a seventh of a farthing per pound.

Mr. HOLLIDAY—There are 2,240 pounds in a ton of cotton, and there are 2,800 eighths of a penny in ten francs, which will give rather more than two-eighths of a penny to every pound.

Mr. LANGE said (that a farthing per pound made about 50s. (or 63 francs,) per ton of cotton, whereas the toll was only ten francs per ton on the registered tonnage of the vessel.

The CHAIRMAN remarked, as to dividend, that in a book then on the table, M. de Lesseps strongly recommends the company to limit their dividend to a fixed amount.

Mr. EVERITT said he thought the rate of ten francs a ton would act very unfavourably upon this district, inasmuch as, if that rate were adhered to, and our whole trade to India and Australia had to pass through the canal, we should have to contribute four times more than Manchester. In bar iron alone we send more to India than Manchester does cotton.

The CHAIRMAN said Mr. Lange had already pointed out that the charge was on the tonnage of the ship; and, supposing the shipowner had a mixed cargo, it would be for him to apportion the canal toll, which he might do in the proportion of three-fourths upon light goods and one-fourth upon iron. The canal proprietors don't want to dive into a ship to find out what is there. They leave the owner of the ship to make the necessary distribution of varying freight.

After a few words from Mr. BROWNING, who expressed himself perfectly satisfied, the CHAIRMAN reminded the meeting that they were not looking upon the question simply as Birmingham men, but as it affected the interests of the community at large. The question before them was simply this:—Would it benefit commerce to have a route 5,000 miles shorter than now exists, by means of a canal, which can be passed by vessels in about ten hours, as he had ascertained from M. de Lesseps, at a cost of ten francs per ton on the registered tonnage? There was another point which must not be lost sight of, and that was the new trade that would be opened up by such a canal with Arabia and the eastern coast of Africa, with which, at present, England had very little communication. He thought there could be no doubt that both ends would be answered, and with this view he had prepared the following resolution:—

“That this Chamber, viewing the question of the advisability of a route across the Isthmus of Suez, as submitted to them by M. de Lesseps, strictly in a commercial point of view, is of opinion

that it would be highly advantageous to this country if some safe and speedy route for shipping between Europe and India could be carried out; that the proposed direct Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez appears to afford the facilities desired, and, at the same time, to supersede the circuitous and expensive route round the Cape of Good Hope; that it is most desirable that the delay consequent upon the transhipment of merchandise at any intermediate station should be avoided, as would be the case were the district to be traversed by a railway."

Mr. BROWNING seconded the adoption of the resolution with much pleasure.

The motion was then passed unanimously by the Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN, in order to give effect to the resolution, then moved—

"That a memorial founded on the foregoing resolution, and recommending the project of a direct Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez to the favourable consideration of Government, be signed by the Vice-President on behalf of this Chamber; and that the President, Richard Spooner, Esq., be requested to present the same to the Board of Trade."

Alderman STURGE seconded the motion.

This was passed unanimously.

On the motion of Alderman LLOYD, seconded by EDWARD GEM, Esq., the cordial thanks of the Chamber were passed to M. de Lesseps and Mr. Lange for the trouble they had taken in the matter, and for the courtesy and readiness with which they had given every requisite information.

Mr. LANGE acknowledged the compliment in suitable terms, remarking that, when the proper time arrived for the consideration of the details suggested, they would have that attention which was due to everything urged by a town of such eminence in the mercantile world as Birmingham.

The proceedings then closed.

B R I S T O L.

PUBLIC MEETING IN THE COMMERCIAL ROOMS.

From the Short-hand Notes of Mr. Austin.

Thursday, June 18, 1857.

Present—Mr. J. P. Jose (Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers), in the chair; M. de Lesseps and Mr. D. A. Lange, (deputation); the Chevalier de Mascarenas (Portuguese Consul); Messrs. J. N. Sanders Bevan (of Bevan, Elton, and Cross), George Wright, Edward Slaughter, Gwynn, Venn, Gwyer, Grant, R. Bush, Frayne, Hewitt, T. T. Taylor, Wheeler, J. Wood, R. M. Hayman, Mark Whitwill, jun. (Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce), T. Tyson, Humphries, Joseph Almond, Leonard Bruton (Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce), C. Ringer, George Edwards, Robert Bruce (Vice-Consul for France), W. Pethick, Robert Leonard, Holmes, Griffin, C. G. Thomas, Avery, Roberts, Gough, George Lucas, George Thomas, S. Dyer, Mark Protheroe (Warden of the Society of Merchant Venturers), Cross, James Bush, &c.

Mr. BEVAN—Gentlemen, at the commencement of the meeting this day perhaps it is hardly consistent with my duty to say anything. Nevertheless, as I have been in some communication with M. de Lesseps already upon the subject, I

may perhaps be allowed to propose that Mr. Jose, who has kindly acceded, be requested to take the chair upon this occasion.

Mr. MARK WHITWILL, junior—I beg to second that proposition.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Jose)—Gentlemen, we are assembled this morning, as I need hardly tell you, in pursuance of an advertisement which appeared in the *Gazette* of last evening, for the purpose of hearing from Mr. Lange an explanation which he is desirous of giving with respect to the formation of a Ship Canal through the Isthmus of Suez, by which the route to India by way of Bombay will be shortened by 5,000 miles. I need not take up your time by any common-place remarks to demonstrate the advantages which must result from such a route not only to the commerce of this country, but of the world. They would only detain you from the useful and valuable information which the gentlemen present are able to give us upon the subject. I may say, however, that the object of Mr. Lange, in addressing you, is not to ask you to prop up a falling institution which has failed to obtain any public support from the mercantile community of the world. Some of us may, however, recollect when the chances of obtaining a means of communication between Bristol and the Metropolis by railway were so depressed, that the undertaking had to go a-begging to people to take even a single share, in order that that noble railway, the Great Western, might be set agoing. I mention this fact, because it would be no proof, even if the object of M. de Lesseps were to prop up this project by your support, that it was a bad one; but that is not the position of the undertaking which the honourable gentleman has come here to explain to us. It has already been very warmly taken up at Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, and other places. It is not to ask you to take shares in this undertaking that they come to explain what their plan is, and what the mode of carrying out that plan will be. It will be for you afterwards—it will be, I may say, for the commercial community of Great Britain to decide for themselves whether they will countenance this scheme and render their aid in carrying it out. I will at once call on M. de Lesseps, just mentioning that he has been Minister Plenipotentiary of the French Government, and that he is commissioned by the Viceroy of Egypt to carry out this plan for shortening the route to India by almost one-half the distance. I will now call on Mr. Lange, who, I am informed, represents M. de Lesseps on this occasion.

Mr. D. A. LANGE (of London)—Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, we are very much obliged to Mr. Bevan for the efforts he has made in bringing about this meeting, and we are also deeply indebted to Mr. Jose for his kindness in taking the chair on the

present occasion. It appears to me that we could not have applied to more appropriate persons to bring this subject before the commercial classes of Bristol, seeing that the Society of Merchant Venturers was originally established for the discovery of unknown lands, and for extending our commerce with distant countries. I think, therefore, that we are extremely fortunate in being able to bring this important matter before you under the auspices of a guild already honourably distinguished. As already explained to you in very lucid terms by the chairman, the object which M. de Lesseps desires to bring before you is one not only fraught with benefit to this country in particular, but it has advantages which are likely to accrue to the commerce of the world in general. The Viceroy of Egypt has granted a concession to M. de Lesseps, empowering him to form a company for constructing a canal through the Isthmus of Suez. The first step taken after the granting of this concession was to ascertain the feasibility of the undertaking. That has been done by several of the most eminent engineers of Europe, who were sent out specially to report on the subject. They have determined that there are no difficulties in the way, that the plan is easy of execution; and you will see their report lying on the table. It took about eight months before they arrived at an ultimate decision; but this has now been done with great care, and no expense has been spared by the Viceroy to arrive at this important result. M. de Lesseps now comes to this country to get the opinion of the different mercantile classes as to the utility of this project. Gentlemen, the project before you embraces in its achievement results of the highest importance to commerce in general, and more especially to the commerce of this country. It is almost impossible to point out the advantages likely to accrue from the opening of a route which will bring into closer contact a population of 300,000,000 on the West, and 600,000,000 on the Eastern quarter of the globe; and this is what the opening of the canal will effect. The distance to cut through is only 92 miles, and the removal of this narrow strip of canal effects a saving of 5,000 miles in space and time. I shall leave it to those better qualified than myself to judge of these advantages, and shall simply confine myself to a few suggestions, which a glance at the map would demonstrate more eloquently than any observations I can make. At the same time, it may not be uninteresting to you to hear some details respecting this important project. (*The speaker here entered into details of the plan unnecessary to repeat.*) I feel, gentlemen, that it would be useless to detain you further on these points; and I shall, therefore, now proceed to offer a few remarks as to the advantages likely to accrue to commerce from the execution of this vast

project. The beneficial effects of the Overland Route to India have been generally experienced ; and the increase in our commercial relations with the East is manifest to all. But notwithstanding the number of vessels employed by the Peninsular and Oriental Company, the traffic is so rapidly increasing that it was only the other day that this company announced their intention to despatch extra steamers from Southampton for the outward voyage, and also extra steamers for the homeward voyage. This clearly proves the tendency in favour of the Suez route, and how urgent the necessity of facilitating the passage. Now, in keeping before us these important features, seeing that they act like pioneers in the undertaking before you, we shall with greater facility be able to form some conception of the immense, nay, almost incalculable results likely to accrue to the commerce of England from the execution of this project. The dangers of the Cape route, the length of passage and want of regularity, are universally felt : whereas the Red Sea, whatever prejudices may exist in the minds of some, is known, and admitted on undoubted testimony, to be a sea of easy navigation ; and amongst the number of those who have adduced their testimony I may mention Captain Harris, of the East India Company's navy, whose name will be found attached to the official report on the table. He traversed the Red Sea no less than seventy times, and his competency, therefore, to give an opinion admits of no controversy. Besides, I believe I am not incorrect in stating that the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers have, for sixteen years, never had to record a single disaster. The route round the Cape is not one of choice. No other exists, and therefore it is at present a necessity. Ships are compelled to take that circuitous route, and put up with the great drawbacks attending it. Coaling stations are few and far between ; and this circumstance has, doubtless, suggested the auxiliary screw-propeller. By this means, the objection to carrying a large quantity of coal is partly met ; but while the only practicable solution to the difficulty is for the time being accomplished, we are necessarily and unavoidably cramping the great and valuable resources placed in our hands by the power of steam. Hence, other extremes have been gone to, and have resulted in the construction of such monster ships as the Great Eastern ; and it is a well-known fact, that the reason which led the eminent engineer to design her was none other than to admit of a sufficient quantity of fuel being carried (I believe 5,000 to 6,000 tons), rendering her thus independent of supplies for the voyage out and home. Now, although there can be little doubt that the end achieved by this grand national experiment in shipbuilding, will, by insuring certainty and regularity, confer an inestimable boon upon the trade of this

country, nevertheless, it is too much to suppose that the trade with India and China can afford to wait for the general construction of such vessels as the Great Eastern. It will, at all events, occupy some time before such an event takes place; nor will there be any occasion to wait for it. The opening of the Suez Canal will effect the object desired. And permit me here to point out how important it is to owners of the present build. It surely could never suit them (at least, I think they would find it extremely inconvenient) to set about constructing a similar class of vessels in order to compete with this monopolizing monster, carrying, when loaded, 22,500 tons, with accommodation for 4,000 passengers and 10,000 troops, and six times as large as our largest man-of-war. I say to owners of the present class of steam-vessels, it must be some satisfaction to know that the opening of the Suez Canal will enable them to maintain that position in the shipping trade which, if the Great Eastern succeeds, they might else be in some danger of losing. By the route of the canal, they will have the advantage of coaling stations at Gibraltar, Malta, Port Said, Aden, and Perim, an acquisition to the stations of the British Government which M. de Lesseps, I know, views with favour, seeing that, while it consolidates her power in the Red Sea, it will enable England to hold, as it were, the keys of the passage through the canal. This proves how fully they anticipate the execution of the project, by the timely steps they have taken. Although the existing route round the Cape prevents the full development of our steam resources, nevertheless the urgent necessity of steam as compared with sailing vessels will manifest itself, and has manifested itself; for according to the Board of Trade, the tonnage registered in one year was 4,000,000 tons sailing vessels and only 300,000 steam vessels—being thus in the proportion of about 13 to 1. In the same year, the actual tonnage of sailing ships constructed was 130,000 tons, and steamers 64,000 tons, which shows that the proportion of 13 to 1 was reduced to only 2 to 1 in favour of steamers. The great desideratum, as I said before, is speed and regularity in shipments. For contracts with India it is felt to be of most urgent importance; in our relations with China indispensable; and with Australia an absolute necessity. Who, trading with that rising colony, has not experienced enormous losses from winter goods arriving in summer, and summer goods arriving in winter? The results have been frightful, threatening at one time most serious consequences—300 failures having taken place at Melbourne in one year, owing, in a great measure, to the present uncertain mode of transit. With regard to India, it was only recently that the great Indian cotton question was brought prominently before the world by the Member for Stock-

port, at a meeting in London. He showed how urgently important it is to have a speedy and regular communication with India. The President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce came to London on purpose to preside at the meeting; and there is now an association formed, called the "Cotton Supply Association." A second meeting was subsequently held at the Town Hall, Manchester, for the purpose of receiving and conferring with deputations from the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and the Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association. On that occasion, any rivalry which might have existed between Manchester and Liverpool was forgotten and absorbed in this important question, which is now agitating the country. Our annual consumption of cotton is 900,000,000 pounds weight, and we draw from America 700,000,000 pounds. Now, Lord Stanley, at a meeting in London, admitted that cotton composed 4-5ths of the whole exports of the Slave states. It appears, also, that our future prospects of supply remain very insecure, because, while we are attempting to put down slavery, on the one hand, we are giving it an additional stimulus on the other by our demand for cotton. In fact, we are told that no less than thirty vessels are now regularly employed in the slave trade. Attention has been arrested to Candeish in India, a province consisting of 5,000,000 acres, and capable of supplying all the cotton wants of England. But the great difficulty in carrying out this desirable end is the want of regularity and the delay in transit. Now, the opening of the Suez Canal would enable all sized steam vessels to contribute to meet these requirements; and its completion warmly attaches itself to the interest of this Association, and is in no small degree a solution of the difficulties the Association has to contend with. With respect to sailing vessels, let me say that the owners may conjecture, from what I have stated, that they will not all so largely share in the advantages to be derived from the opening of the Canal. The N.N.W. winds which prevail in the Mediterranean from April to September are favourable to the voyage out to India. They will save 7,000 miles, or half the distance, going to Bombay, or to a port in the province of Candeish. From Aden to Bombay is a voyage of eight days during the favourable monsoons or trade-winds. Many have done it in seven days, of which I can adduce testimony if required. The voyage home, from September to April, will effect a similar saving of distance and time; or, if a vessel leaves England in August, she will have a favourable wind out and home. Thus, on the whole, sailing vessels will largely share the advantages of the short route. Nor must the circumstance be lost sight of, that, their expenses being much less, they will be able to carry goods at a cheaper rate than vessels provided with steam, and which are put to the extra

cost of coal and engines. You will naturally be desirous of knowing upon what grounds we have based our calculations in a financial point of view. I will endeavour to state them as briefly as possible. The capital required for the undertaking is £8,000,000. This includes £1,200,000 for interest on capital during the construction of the works and ulterior improvements. Taking the usual, not the present, rate of interest at five per cent. would give a sum of £400,000 annually. To this must be added £63,000 for the annual maintenance of the Canal, making, together, £463,000. It only requires two vessels of 2,500 tons each to yield double that sum—say about £800,000. The annual passage round the Cape from countries in Europe is 3,000,000 tons, and of this we may fairly calculate upon two-thirds passing through the Canal—say 2,000,000 tons. Now, when it is understood that two ships daily only represent an annual tonnage of 1,800,000 tons, I think I am not overstating the probable returns. I will now add another important feature. According to the official returns of the Board of Trade, the annual increase of shipping, instead of 100,000 tons, as we had generally reckoned on, is 322,000 foreign shipping. The rates will, no doubt, be greater six years hence—the time fixed for the full completion of the Canal. But assuming it only to continue at the present rate, it would give, at the end of six years, nearly 2,000,000 tons more engaged in the foreign trade. Now, although this will certainly not be all available for the Canal, a considerable portion of it will, and would add largely to the returns. I have taken this at the existing state of things; but seeing that the Canal will only be completed when trade has arrived at a still greater stage of development, it may not be out of place to glance at the results likely to accrue from the further development of our trade with *China*—an immense, overpopulated country, on the eve of being brought, for the first time, into closer contact with Christian nations, possessing resources of which we can but form a very imperfect idea. But seeing how greatly the development of that country will affect the returns of the Canal, and how greatly its opening will tend to their development, it may not be out of place to glance at the position of this vast empire and the nature of its inhabitants, because our success in those regions much depends upon it. The actual amount of the population of China has caused much difference of opinion on the ground of the difficulty of arriving at a correct result. By the Chinese authorities the population is stated to be 370,000,000, and I see no sufficient reason to doubt its correctness. It is a subject generally known to those in the China trade, that there are few countries where it can be more easily ascertained. It is of most vital importance that the authorities should know this, because a certain proportion of the

revenue, in money and in grain, is contributed by each province. The consequence is, there is no street in China without a constable, and no district without its officer. Indeed, there is one man to every ten houses, called a tithingman; and so far does their stringency in this respect go, that every family is required to state, on a board hanging before their houses, the name of each inmate; and there is a severe law to punish false returns. This shows the importance attached by the authorities to ascertaining the true census, and the reason why the population I mentioned is likely to be the correct one. Now, with respect to our estimate of their intellect and abilities, I fear we are too prone to draw an inference from the circumstance of their applying that epithet "barbarian" to us, which we consider more applicable to persons entertaining such obscure notions. I think it may be traced to their imperfect knowledge of us, and their ignorance of geography, which is instanced in their maps of Europe, as I dare say many present may have seen; it is a singular specimen, indeed quite a curiosity. A Chinese map of the world, 2 feet wide by $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, is almost covered with China alone. In the left-hand corner above, they have painted a sea, but only 3 inches square, in which there are small dots, representing islands, and these are England, Africa, Spain, Portugal, France, and Holland, all islands, but they have got Holland down as larger than all the rest. Africa is a mere mite. (Laughter.) Even to this day they suppose the earth to be a square body, with the stars stuck about like pins in a huge pincushion. (Renewed laughter.) These impressions are the consequence of their limited intercourse with us; but when they come in closer contact, they will be removed. In other matters, they are far from ignorant. Education in China is very general. Indeed, the poorest man can read and write, and that is more than can be said of more civilized countries. There are annual examinations, and these are fully attended; indeed, the chief officers of the state are known to be men of distinguished ability; and able men are always in requisition, and fully appreciated by the Sovereign, who attaches great importance to literary institutions. In the themes selected for examination, politics are most scrupulously avoided, or any allusion to their present government. This selfish policy, no doubt, cramps the true development of China, but when this undergoes a change, I think we shall have little difficulty in opening our trade with such people as the Chinese, who will not be slow to perceive its importance to them. It seems almost incredible, when we come to reflect that this vast population should only take from us the value £2,000,000 sterling annually, while we import from China a value annually of £9,000,000 sterling. And this with a population of 370,000,000. However, I think

we may fairly assume that after the recent occurrences, a new era is breaking upon China, the results of which it is impossible to foresee. They must be immense; and while the canal would participate largely in these benefits, it will materially assist in bringing them about. There is another point which I must not entirely pass over. I do not wish to detain you any longer, and will therefore only briefly allude to it; but it is one which interests Bristol deeply. It is the change effected, by the opening of the canal, in our commerce with Arabia and Abyssinia. There are islands skirting the coasts, containing vast deposits of guano, hitherto untouched; and I believe it is in contemplation to fit out vessels from Bristol to load guano from one of these islands, and if I am not mistaken, arrangements have been already entered into to that effect, and ships have actually been chartered at £4 per ton freight, to one of the guano islands. Now the saving of distance to the guano islands by the canal will be greater than to any other parts of the world. It would be something more than one-half, being reduced from 14,000 to 6,000 miles, being a saving of 8,000 miles. These guano islands are the resort of cormorants, and a variety of wild sea-birds, and may be worked with great advantage. And farmers little think that they too are interested in the accomplishment of this project. The whole sea abounds with a variety of sponge, equal in quality to Turkey sponge; and the coral of commerce found there is very plentiful, and better than that fished off the Sicilian coasts. Black fish, valuable for their oils, abound in some parts; and several of the harbours are literally choked with thousands of fine edible fish. The harbours on the Arabian side are capable of receiving fleets of fishing vessels, and are completely land-locked, but there are only few acknowledged ports on the Arabian side. Yambo, Djedda, Loheiah, and Mocha, are the only ones. Now, as concerns Mocha, although the coffee is called after it, in reality it is grown some hundred miles further up the sea, but chiefly shipped from Mocha. If the canal were opened, the whole of this produce would be shipped through it, instead of being conveyed to India, and then transhipped for Europe. Nor is it too much to predict, that if the Arab coffee-growers were encouraged, they would soon produce a much larger quantity than at present. As regards the opposite side of the coast, Abyssinia, on the inland part of Africa, live stock could be obtained for the use of shipping, to any extent. We thought 5s. or 10s. a low price in Australia for a sheep, but you will be surprised to hear that in Abyssinia they can be had for 1s. a piece. Eggs, poultry, honey, corn, butter, bullocks, &c., are to be bought at equally low rates; and from the interior can be procured ivory, horns, hides, ostrich feathers, and other valuable articles, when the country is more settled. To reclaim the

Gallese and other wild tribes, would be conferring a boon upon them and ourselves; and a most profitable trade for both parties could be established. Between the Straits of Babelmandeb and Massowah, *sulphur* of the purest kind can be obtained in any quantities. Perhaps you are not aware that on the coast near Kosseir, within 200 miles of Suez, the Viceroy has already granted a concession to an Anglo-French company, with a view to the working of the sulphur mines there. There is one feature which I must here mention, and that is—Before the granting of the concession, when the application was made for it to the Viceroy by a Frenchman, the Viceroy told him he would grant it, if the company were composed of as many Englishmen and Frenchmen; and therefore it is now half English and half French, and is called, as I have said, the Anglo-French Sulphur Company. At some distance from Massowah, there are immense *salt-deposits*, and these supply the interior of India. At the entrance of the Red Sea, at Port Zelah, large quantities of horns and hides, gums arabic, myrrh, and other products, are annually exported. I have entered into these details, which I hope will be sufficient to show that the opening of the canal will not only materially assist in bringing about results indispensable for carrying on our existing trade with greater advantage to ourselves, but that it will be a means of opening out trades which do not exist, or which have remained dormant for centuries, and, perhaps, never would have been brought into existence but for the execution of the vast project now before the meeting. The more it is gone into, the more gigantic do the results appear, and it is not to be wondered at, under the existing circumstances, that those acquainted with even a portion of those results should have expressed such an anxiety to have shares reserved for them. The result is, that nearly the whole of the capital has been reserved, and in the following proportions:—(*Financial statement already given.*) I may tell you that when the news arrived in Egypt that it had been decided to reserve only £2,000,000 for Egypt, and that this included Turkey, great disappointment was felt, and although the list had never been fully opened, the shares, much against the wish of M. de Lesseps, were sold in anticipation at eight and nine per cent. premium. I shall not now, Gentlemen, occupy your time any longer, on which I fear I have already trespassed, but merely state that we have already obtained nineteen resolutions in favour of this important project. The north of England, Newcastle especially, has taken a very prominent part. The places at which we have obtained the resolutions to which I have referred, are Liverpool and Manchester (we held four meetings in those two important cities), Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Hull, and Bir-

mingham. I shall now be happy to reply to any questions you may think proper to put to me. [Mr. Lange sat down amidst continued cheering.]

The CHAIRMAN—If any gentleman has any doubts or objections respecting this scheme, or any question to ask, we shall be most happy to have them mentioned, and Mr. Lange will do his best to answer or remove them.

Mr. MARK WHITWILL, jun.—Is it part of the scheme to keep steamers to tow vessels through the canal?

Mr LANGE—It is; and no extra charge will be made for them.

Mr. WHITWILL—In order to be of advantage to sailing vessels there should be steamers kept at Gibraltar, because they might otherwise be kept there for three weeks, and during that time they could make the passage round the Cape.

Mr. LANGE—This is a very essential point, but whether it will form part of the plan of the present company, or whether the advantage to be secured will induce a private company to be started for that purpose, is uncertain. I think that with the well known enterprise of Englishmen it is not at all unlikely that before we can look round we shall see a prospectus issued for providing steam tugs at Gibraltar.

Mr. WHITWILL—Have any calculations been made as to the shifting of the sand in the Mediterranean? and are dredges to be used?

Mr. LANGE—A question has been put to me with regard to the shifting of the sand in the bay of Pelusium, and whether dredges are to be used. The bed of the sea is singularly adapted for dredging, and when you have made an opening, the sand being very firm, it is probable that it will not silt up again. A corvette was stationed there, at the cost of the Viceroy, during the worst months of the year, and, notwithstanding the occasional heavy winds, she never shifted her anchor at all. Into this point, the engineers inquired very particularly, and the result is stated in the Commissioners' Report now before you. Dredging forms a very prominent feature in the works.

Mr. RICHARD POOLE KING, (African merchant)—The following resolution has been put into my hands, and though I was not prepared to say a word at this meeting, it is of so much importance to England and the world that this Ship Canal should be carried out, that I shall move it. While we have such an immense territory in the East Indies, and such connexion with it, any plan to lessen the distance between this country and India by almost one-half will be to thousands in this country, and millions in the East, of the greatest interest and importance. I have, therefore, no difficulty in moving the resolution. This is no new question in the world; it has been talked about for

the last century ; and the difficulty always was the level of the two seas, which was so serious, that locks and other expensive engineering would seem to be required. But if what Mr. Lange states on that point is correct, and there is every reason to believe it is, half the expense of constructing, such as we have been led to believe it would be, will be saved. Bristol is not much interested in the question ; but although we do not carry on much trade with the East Indies, many persons in the immediate neighbourhood have made their fortunes by the East. To them and to all who are in any way connected with the East, the shortening of the passage must be very desirable. For these and other reasons, it is important that the parties now going through England to obtain an expression of opinion on the scheme, should have the support of this neighbourhood. The information brought forward to-day convinces my mind both of its possibility and desirability.

MR. EDWARD SLAUGHTER, (Engineer)—I have been requested to second the resolution, and I do so with the greatest pleasure. The whole question resolves itself into the engineering difficulty of the work, and upon that I will say a word or two. I have had transactions of some magnitude with the late Mr. Rendel, and on one occasion I asked him his real opinion on the engineering difficulties, and he told me most distinctly that he felt perfectly confident in the feasibility of the project. Assuming, therefore, the calculations on this point correct, there can be no doubt that, in a commercial bearing, the making of this canal would be a reasonably profitable venture. Under these circumstances, I beg to second the resolution.

MR. KING—Oh, I beg pardon ; I sat down without reading the resolution. It is as follows :—

“That this meeting is gratified with the explanations afforded by M. de Lesseps and Mr. Lange, and highly approves of the proposed Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez, being of opinion that it is of the greatest importance to the commerce of the whole world, and that it would afford facilities which no railway could present.”

THE CHAIRMAN—Does any gentleman wish to speak on the resolution ? Now is the time to do so, if any gentleman desires to make any observations upon it. I shall now put the resolution.

The resolution was then put, and carried unanimously.

MR. EDWARD BEVAN, iron merchant—A resolution has been put into my hands, and I have great pleasure in moving it. Nothing need be added as to the advantage of the thing. We have simply given an opinion, but that is not sufficient; and the object of what I have to move is to give that opinion effect. Between nations there is often a difference of opinion. We often have a snap at the French (a laugh), and they are just as ready to have a clip at us. They have no objection to pay us in our own coin. But things of this sort should not interfere with a great scheme for the good of all nations; and there have been difficulties in connexion with this scheme, which it is desirable should be removed. Commerce may be said to do more for mankind than anything else, and in that sense it may be said to be a political as well as a commercial undertaking. The resolution I have to move is—

“That a Memorial, founded on the foregoing resolution, be forwarded by the Chairman to the Members for this City, with a request that they will submit the same to the earnest consideration of her Majesty’s Government, expressing a hope that the Government will obviate any opposition which may arise calculated to prevent the immediate execution of so noble and highly useful an enterprise.”

MR. ROBERT BRUCE—I wish to second this resolution, and I do so as an old merchant, who in early life have been in the East. I can fully confirm a great deal that has been read in the books M. de Lesseps was kind enough to leave in my office. In perusing them I might have considered they had some political object in view, but I am glad to find that is not the case, and that any supposition of the sort has been completely answered. It is satisfactory, therefore, to find that there is no political or other selfish object on the part of any nation. So what is a European object, is an object for the general weal I may say for the world. I second the resolution with very great pleasure, and I hope and trust that our Members, who are very efficient, will exert themselves to promote the object, and especially to get rid of the objections of the Government, if any

such exist. I hope no objections do exist, and that the duty of our Members and the Government will be quite clear in promoting this object.

The CHAIRMAN—Before I put the resolution I will just say I regret, that, among the many highly respectable gentlemen who are here to-day, we are not favoured with the company of those who are more immediately connected with the cotton manufacture of this neighbourhood. There is one province—one district in India, Candeish—which is capable of producing cotton to supply the entire wants of this country. Mr. Lange has told you we are dependent on one country for seven-eighths of our cotton supply, and yet we have one district in India which alone could supply us. By this canal we should be brought in contact with that portion of our gracious Sovereign's territory, which would supply us abundantly with an article so essential to the prosperity and life of our population. The resolution has been seconded by Mr. Bruce, and it is gratifying to me, as Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers, to find that the first resolution was moved by a former Master of that Society, and that this has been seconded by a gentleman (Mr. Bruce) who is a still older Master, and who induced me to enter that Society. This shows that not only myself, but those who have preceded me as Masters of the Society of Merchant Venturers, feel considerable interest in this enterprise, and are prepared to give it their support.

The resolution was put to the meeting, and carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN—In the name of M. de Lesseps, I may now thank you for your attendance here to-day; and the business, I presume, is at an end.

Mr. MARK WHITWILL, junior, (Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce)—I beg to move "That the best thanks of this meeting be presented to Monsieur de Lesseps and to Mr. Lange, for their presence here this day, and for their lucid exposition of the important question which has been under its consideration." To many gentlemen present this subject is no doubt almost new; but the lecture of Mr. Lange will have afforded the necessary information. There was one subject alluded to, and which, I think, I should like to have seen more strongly pointed out—that is, as to the different levels of the two seas. Mr. Lange alluded to the two seas being on the same level; and, if I had not read the Report of the Commissioners, I should have been inclined to ask him the question. The Commissioners are perfectly satisfied that the two seas are on a level. It was thought that there was a considerable difference between the two seas; but that question has been set at rest, and it is ascertained that the difference is scarcely perceptible.

Mr. LANGE—The difference is scarcely perceptible; but it amounts to this—the Red Sea is about two feet higher than the Mediterranean.

Mr. R. M. HAYMAN seconded the resolution.

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

Mr. LANGE—On the part of M. de Lesseps and myself, I beg to express to you our very earnest thanks—first, for having listened so patiently to our explanations on a subject deeply interesting: secondly, for the attention you have paid us; and, thirdly, for the resolutions which you have passed. I assure you those resolutions will assist materially in bringing about the achievement of this vast enterprise. We are, as I said before, fortunate in having been able to bring the project before the commercial classes of Bristol, through the venerable Society of Merchant Venturers; and we have experienced to-day how anxious that Society is to bring before the commercial public this great project, and how anxious, also, it is to further the views of those whose object is to develop the resources of distant countries, to create trade where none existed, and to promote the facilities for the extension of trade wherever it has been established. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. JOSEPH ALMOND moved—"That the best thanks of this meeting be given to the Chairman, for his kindness in taking the chair on this occasion, and for his able and impartial conduct therein."

M. DE LESSEPS and Mr. LANGE seconded the motion, and it was carried by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN—I thank you for the vote you have passed on me as Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers, which has existed for five centuries, and which has sent out some of the most enterprising men to discover distant parts of the world. Among them was Sebastian Cabot, the discoverer of Newfoundland, and I feel I am only humbly treading in the steps of those who have gone before me, in doing all in my power to forward a project of this kind.

The meeting then terminated.

LONDON.

PUBLIC MEETING AT THE LONDON TAVERN.*

Wednesday, June 24, 1857.

From the Short-hand Notes of Mr. STRANG.

[Sir JAMES DUKE in the Chair.]

Sir JAMES DUKE, Baronet, M.P., entered the room at one o'clock, accompanied by M. DE LESSEPS, Mr. NORRIS, M.P., and several other influential city gentlemen.

Sir JAMES DUKE having been unanimously called to the chair, rose and said—Gentlemen, I need hardly say that I feel very happy in presiding over a public meeting, having for its object so important an achievement as that which you have been called upon to-day to consider. I feel the more grateful at being called upon to preside over this meeting, because of the public position I hold as one of the Representatives of the City of London, and as such, to a certain extent, the guardian of the political interests of the inhabitants of that important locality. (Hear, hear.) But at the same time I wish it to be distinctly understood that, while I express the pleasure I feel at being called upon to preside over a meeting, having for its object the attainment of so important an undertaking, I do not mean to express an opinion upon the subject from myself individually. I have only to say, that I shall be most happy to discharge the duty I have undertaken to the best of my ability, and to hear any gentleman who may wish to offer any observation upon the subject. (Hear, hear.) The best way of commencing the proceedings will be to read a letter, which has been addressed

* A leading article in the *Daily News* thus admirably characterized the meeting:—"The City of London is this day invited to pass judgment on a project whose realization will make an era in the history of the world. The greatest mercantile emporium of modern times is asked to consider the greatest mercantile problem of all times, the practicability of making a Ship Canal through the Isthmus of Suez—of forming an artificial Bosphorus between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. It is not often that a matter of this moment is submitted to the arbitrament of municipal councils and national legislatures. The scheme involves nothing less than the construction of a new highway for the nations between the East and the West, of diverting into a new channel the most lucrative streams of modern commerce, and abridging by some thousands of miles the sea-distance that now separates Europe from the ancient opulence of India and China, and the young enterprise of Australia."

by Lord John Russell to the Lord Mayor. This letter was as follows :—

“M. de Lesseps having expressed a desire that a meeting should take place in the City of London, in order to give to the merchants, bankers, and others, an opportunity of hearing the explanations of M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, relative to the proposed Ship Canal, across the Isthmus of Suez, I should be glad to find that the Lord Mayor would have the goodness to call and preside over such a meeting.

(Signed) “J. RUSSELL.

“6th June, 1857.”

“I participate in this request.

(Signed) “J. DUKE.

“R. W. CRAWFORD.

“LIONEL DE ROTHSCHILD.”

The Lord Mayor having previous engagements, to attend to, I was requested to take his place here to-day, and in compliance with that request, which was joined in by a number of gentlemen connected with the City, I have consented to take the chair; and, as I have said, shall be happy to hear any observations which any gentlemen present may wish to make in reference to the undertaking. (Hear, hear.) I will now request M. de Lesseps to explain the nature of the undertaking.

M. DE LESSEPS rose, and pointing to a map of the world, said that a look at it was the best argument in favour of the enterprise of which he was placed at the head, and which, however considerable its consequences might be, was one perfectly simple in its conception and in its execution. He pointed out that 300,000,000 men, possessing all the advantages of civilisation and industry, would be brought, by the Suez Canal, into contact with 700,000,000 still in a state of barbarism, and whose soil and climate produce in abundance all those articles which were necessary to the progressive development of European manufactures and a better alimentation of our numerous working classes, who were a subject of so much interest, and who were thus destined to participate in the comforts which, through their labour, we were now enabled to enjoy. He adverted to the declared opinion of the most competent engineers and nautical men as to the facility with which the undertaking could be executed; and drew the attention of the meeting to the plans spread upon the table, by which, and by the blue-book they had in their hands, they could themselves judge of the importance of the labours of the International Commission. M. de Lesseps then mentioned his journey to Constantinople, and

the respectful demand made to the Sultan for the ratification of the project by the Viceroy of Egypt, whose deference and fidelity to the chief of Islamism were exhibited on this occasion, as well as in all those which, since his accession to power, had given him an opportunity of showing his devotion to his august suzerain. The inclination of the Sultan of the Porte and of the present illustrious Vizir was, and still continued, favourable to the execution of the proposed Suez Canal, which was regarded as destined to prove very useful to Turkey, according to the expressions of a Vizirial letter addressed to the Viceroy. M. de Lesseps went on to say that he had met with no other opposition at Constantinople than that of the British Ambassador, and it was this opposition which, at the present moment, impeded the progress of the undertaking. "That was the question." He wished, however, to have it clearly understood that he attached no blame to this opposition, so long as it was grounded on no other motive than the desire to await an expression of the public opinion of England; and if he were called upon to give any opinion in the matter, he would, as he had before done at the numerous meetings held in the country, give praise to the Government and to its agents for refusing to allow any undertaking to proceed in which they believed the interests of their country were involved, and for wishing, first of all, to have the confidence which would be afforded by the competent judgment of a majority of their countrymen.

M. de Lesseps concluded his address in the following words :—

In this position of matters, instead of appealing to the representatives of the several Governments which had highly approved of the undertaking, or to the Ambassador of my own country, whose influence is not inferior to that of his colleague, and whose support could not fail to afford an efficient protection to my interests, I chose rather to address myself directly and publicly to the good sense and practical judgment of the commercial classes of England. The provinces have already passed the most conclusive resolutions in favour of the enterprise. To you, now, I appeal for the same moral support, and I trust it will not be refused me in the metropolis of free trade. (Hear, hear.)

Indeed, what renders the canalisation of the Isthmus of Suez possible in the present day—nay, I may say necessary—is the immense development of the commerce of Great Britain, due to the fruitful principles of free trade, which it will always be the glory of England to have the first proclaimed and put into practice; and, when the canal joining the two seas shall be opened, the communication between all the nations of the earth will become so important and so multiplied that they will break through every barrier that obstructs their free expansion, and

the adoption of free trade will become a necessity for all nations. (Applause.)

MR. DANIEL ADOLPHUS LANGE rose and said—The subject which M. de Lesseps has already explained in lucid terms is one, not only fraught with benefit to this country in particular, but it has advantages which are likely to accrue to the commerce of the world in general. The Viceroy of Egypt has granted a concession to M. de Lesseps empowering him to form a company for constructing a canal through the Isthmus of Suez. The first step taken after the granting of the concession was to ascertain the feasibility of the project. I have only to refer to the reports which are before you on the table, and which are the result of the most elaborate inquiry by some of the most eminent engineers in Europe, all of whom concur in opinion, that not only is it an undertaking which can be easily carried out, but one which would prove most valuable to this country in a commercial point of view. (Hear, hear.) I have the satisfaction to state that M. de Lesseps has not presented himself before a meeting of the merchants of this important city until he had first ascertained the feeling of the country in some of the most important commercial and manufacturing towns in England; and having done this, he now comes before you, to ask your opinion of the undertaking (Hear, hear.) Gentlemen, I do not propose to occupy your time at any length, but perhaps it may not be considered uninteresting if I enter into a few details in connection with the undertaking. (Hear, hear.) In the first place, I have to state that the present intelligent and enlightened Viceroy of Egypt has granted a concession to M. de Lesseps, empowering him to form a company for the construction of a canal across the Isthmus of Suez, and the first obvious step after that concession was to ascertain the practicability of the undertaking. With this view several of the most eminent Engineers in Europe had been requested to investigate the matter, and their report is that there are no difficulties in the way. How easy it is of execution the meeting may see from the plans which are on the table. They have taken eight or nine months to consider their decision, which has been prepared with great care, and no cost has been spared by the Viceroy to enable them to arrive at a satisfactory result. In the present instance, M. de Lesseps comes before you in order to get your opinion as to the utility of the project. It is impossible to over-estimate the advantage likely to accrue from the opening up of a route which will bring three hundred millions of people in the West, and the six hundred millions in the East into closer contact. (Cheers.) And this can be done by cutting through a strip of land only ninety-two and a-half miles

across; but which will effect a saving of five thousand miles in distance, and a corresponding saving in time. (Cheers.) (*The speaker here entered into details of the plan.*) I will now proceed to call attention to some of the advantages that are likely to accrue from the success of this project. Of the benefit of the Overland Route to India it is unnecessary to speak, the less so as the Peninsular and Oriental Company has found it necessary to put on extra steamers both for the outward and homeward passage. As to the dangers of the Cape Route, and the safety of that by the Red Sea, let me state that for sixteen years the Peninsular and Oriental Company has not had a single disaster. With the aid of the proposed canal, the whole of the trade to the East may go by that, the Red Sea Route. That route will also avoid the necessity of constructing vessels of such an immense size as the Great Eastern. By the route of the canal, steamers will have the advantage of coaling stations at Gibraltar, Malta, Port Saïd, Aden, and no doubt Perim, which had been lately occupied by the British Government, a fact which M. de Lesseps views with favour, seeing that while it consolidates her power in the Red Sea, it will enable England to hold, as it were, the keys of the passage through the canal. This proves how fully we anticipate the execution of the project by the timely steps we have taken. Although the existing route round the Cape prevents the full development of our steam resources, nevertheless the urgent necessity of steam as compared with sailing vessels will manifest itself, and has manifested itself; for according to the Board of Trade returns, the tonnage registered in one year was four millions of tons sailing vessels; and only 300,000 tons steam vessels, being thus in proportion about thirteen to one. In the same year the actual tonnage of sailing ships constructed was 130,000 tons, and steamers 64,000 tons, which showed that the proportion of thirteen to one was reduced to only two to one in favour of steamers. The great consideration, as I have said before, is speed and regularity in shipments. For contracts with India, it is felt to be of the most urgent importance, in our relations with China indispensable, and with Australia an absolute necessity. Who, trading with that rising colony, has not experienced enormous losses from winter goods arriving in summer, and summer goods arriving in winter? The results have been frightful, threatening at one time most serious consequences, 300 failures having taken place in Melbourne in one year, owing in a great measure to the present mode of transit. With regard to India, it is only recently that the great India cotton question was brought prominently before the world by the Member for Stockport. At a meeting in London, it was shown how urgently important it was to have a speedy and regular

communication with India. The President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce came to London on purpose to preside at the meeting, on the occasion of Mr. Smith reading his paper; and there is now an association formed, called "The Cotton Supply Association." I perceive, also, by the report of the debates, that the cotton question had, on the previous evening, warmly engaged the attention of the House of Commons. Indeed, the advantages to be expected from the Red Sea route, as respects our supply of cotton, can hardly be overrated. Our annual consumption of cotton is 900,000,000 of pounds, and we draw from America 700,000,000 pounds. Now, Lord Stanley, at a meeting in London, admitted that four-fifths of the produce of cotton we consume is slave-grown. It appears, also, that our future prospects of supply remain very insecure, because we are attempting to put down slavery on the one hand, and giving it an additional stimulus on the other, by a demand for cotton. In fact, we are told that no less than 30 vessels are now regularly employed in the slave trade. Attention has been directed to Candeish, in India, a place consisting of 5,000,000 of acres, and capable of supplying all the cotton marts of England. But the great difficulty in carrying out this desirable end, is the want of regularity, and the delay in transit. Now, the opening of the Suez Canal will enable all sizes of steam vessels to contribute to meet these requirements, and this is in no small degree a solution of the difficulties the Association has to contend with. With respect to sailing vessels, the owners may conjecture that they will not all so largely share in the advantages to be derived from the opening of the canal. The N.N.W. winds which prevail in the Mediterranean from April to September are favourable to the voyage out to India; they will save 7,000 miles, or half the distance going to Bombay, or to a port in the province of Candeish. From Aden to Bombay is a voyage of eight days during the favourable monsoons or trade winds; many have done it in seven days, a fact I can adduce testimony of, if required. The voyage home, from September to April, will effect a similar saving of distance and time; for if a vessel leaves England in August, she will have a favourable wind out, and home. Thus, on the whole, sailing vessels will largely share the advantages of the short route; nor must the circumstance be lost sight of, that, their expenses being much less, they will be enabled to carry goods at a cheaper rate than vessels provided with steam, and which are put to the extra costs of coal and engines. I will next endeavour to explain the financial bearings of the question as briefly as possible. The capital required for the work is £8,000,000. This includes £1,200,000 for interest and capital during the construction of the works and ulterior improvements. Taking the usual, not the present value

of interest at five per cent., this will give a sum of £400,000 annually. To this must be added £63,000 for the annual maintenance of the canal, making altogether £463,000. The annual traffic round the Cape, from countries in Europe, is 3,000,000 tons, and of this you may fairly calculate upon two-thirds passing through the canal—say 2,000,000. Now, when it is considered that two ships only daily represent an annual tonnage of 1,800,000 tons, I think I am not overstating the probable returns. I will now add another important feature. According to the Board of Trade, the annual increase of foreign shipping is 322,000 tons. Having enlarged on the importance of the trade with China, its immense population, the intelligence of the people, and the narrow policy of the Government, I express my anticipation of the best results in our relations with China, in consequence of the opening of the Suez Canal. Another point to which I wish to call attention, is the change which will be effected by the opening of the canal in our commerce with Arabia and Abyssinia. There are islands skirting the coast, containing vast deposits of guano, hitherto untouched by the hand of man, and already shipments have been made for this country. Now, the saving of distance, to the Guano Islands by the canal will be greater than to any other part of the world. It will be something more than one-half, being reduced from 14,000 to 6,000 miles, or a saving of 8,000 miles. These Guano Islands are the resort of the cormorant, and a variety of other sea birds, and may be worked with great advantage. Farmers little think that they are interested in the accomplishment of this project. The whole sea abounds with a variety of sponge, equal in quality to Turkey sponge; and the coral of commerce found there is very plentiful, and better than that fished off the Sicilian coast. Black fish, valuable for their oils, abound in some parts; and several of the harbours are literally choked with thousands of edible fish. The harbours on the Arabian side are capable of receiving fleets of fishing vessels, and are completely landlocked; but there are only few acknowledged ports on the Arabian side—Yambo, Djedda, Loheiah, and Mocha. Now, as concerns Mocha, although the coffee is called after it, in reality it is grown some hundred miles further up the sea, but is exported chiefly from Mocha. If the canal were opened, the whole of this produce would be shipped through it, instead of being conveyed to India, and then transhipped for Europe. Nor is it too much to predict, that if the Arab coffee growers are encouraged they will soon produce a much larger quantity than at present. As regards the opposite side of the coast, Abyssinia, on the inland part of Africa, live-stock could be obtained for the use of shipping to any extent. We think 5s., or 10s., a low price in Australia for

a sheep; but you will be surprised to hear that in Abyssinia they could be had at 1s. each. Eggs, poultry, honey, corn, butter, bullocks, &c., may be had at equally low rates; and from the interior can be produced, ivory, horns, hides, ostrich feathers, and other articles, when the country is more settled. To reclaim the Gallese, and other wild tribes, will be conferring a boon to them and ourselves, and a most profitable trade for both parties can be established. Between the Straits of Babelmandeb and Massowah, sulphur of the purest kind can be obtained in any quantities. Perhaps you are not aware that within 200 miles of Suez, the Viceroy has already granted a concession to an Anglo-French Company, with a view to the working of the sulphur mines on the west side of the coast of the Red Sea. There is one feature, which I must here mention, which is—Before the granting the concession, when the application was made to the Viceroy, by a Frenchman, the Viceroy told him he would grant it if the company was comprised of as many Englishmen as Frenchmen; and therefore it is now half English and half French, and is called the Anglo-French Sulphur Company. At some distance from Massowah, the entrance to the Red Sea, there are immense salt deposits, and these supply the interior of India. At the entrance of the Red Sea, at Port Zelah, large quantities of horns and hides, gum arabic, myrrh, and other products are annually exported. I have entered into these details to show that the opening of the canal will not only materially assist in bringing out results indispensable for carrying on an existing trade with great advantage to ourselves; but that it will be the means of opening out trades which do not exist, or which have remained dormant for centuries, and, perhaps, never would have been brought into existence but for the vast project now before the meeting. The more it is gone into, the more gigantic do the results appear; and it is not to be wondered at, under existing circumstances, that those acquainted with even a portion of these results should have expressed such an anxiety to have shares reserved for them. The result is that nearly the whole of the capital has been reserved. I may tell you that when the news arrived in Egypt about the amount reserved for Egypt, that it had been decided only to reserve £2,000,000 for Egypt and Turkey altogether (the list has never been opened), the shares, much against the wish of M. de Lesseps, went up to eight and nine per cent. premium. I have only to state further, that we have obtained nineteen resolutions in favour of this important project, principally in the North of England. Newcastle, especially, has taken a very prominent part in facilitating the execution of this scheme; Newcastle, from which 300 vessels arrive and go out at a tide. The places at which we have obtained the votes

were Liverpool and Manchester (five meetings in these two places), Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Hull, and Birmingham. And, in conclusion, I express myself ready to answer any question that may be put by the meeting. (Hear, hear.)

CHAIRMAN—M. de Lesseps desires me to say that he is most desirous to afford any additional explanation upon this important subject that any gentleman may be desirous to have; and therefore I now beg, on his behalf, to request and invite the fullest discussion upon the subject. (Hear, hear.)

A foreign gentleman thereupon put a question, which was answered by Mr. Lange as follows:—

MR. LANGE—The gentleman who has just spoken has asked a question in French: perhaps it will be more satisfactory to the meeting generally if I were to answer it in English, and I shall therefore do so. (Hear, hear.) He has admitted that a canal such as that now proposed would be a great benefit to the country through which it will pass; but he has asked—Would not railroads prove more beneficial? and as there were railways now in course of construction in that country, he says he apprehends that some rivalry may be the result of this canal being formed, and that the result would be to do injury to both undertakings. Now, my answer to that objection is very plain and simple, and it is this, that traffic creates traffic, and that a canal would bring traffic to the railway, as would also a railway bring traffic to a canal; and this cannot be better proved than by the fact that the Viceroy, who had constructed the railway from Alexandria to Cairo, was himself the promoter of the Suez Canal.

A gentleman from the body of the meeting rose and said—I presume that some estimates have been formed as to the proportion of benefit which this country is likely to derive from this undertaking, as compared to the amount of benefit which many ports on the Mediterranean are sure to derive from it. Now, I am aware that an impression has gone abroad to the effect that this country, and particularly the port of London, will not receive anything like the same amount of benefit from this great undertaking which the many ports of the Mediterranean must have flowing into them from it. I think it would, therefore, be satisfactory to have some explanation upon that point, if Mr. Lange would be so good as to communicate it.

MR. LANGE—I am very glad that the gentleman has afforded me an opportunity of giving some information upon that point, and I shall do so in a very few words. If any impression has gone abroad to the effect that the ports of the Mediterranean will derive more benefit from this undertaking than ports at greater distances, all I can say is, that the best

proof of the contrary is to be found in the fact, that, in the month of March last, the number of English vessels that sailed from Alexandria amounted to 42 ; while the whole number of Tuscan, Ottoman, and Greek vessels that sailed in the same month from Alexandria did not exceed nine ; so that, I think, there need be no apprehension that any of the ports of the Mediterranean will have a superiority of advantage over those of England. (Hear, hear.)

MR. FOWLER (of Alexandria).—There is one matter of very great importance which suggests itself to my mind in connexion with this vast undertaking, which I think it would be very desirable for the commercial world of London to bear well in mind before they give the sanction of their support to it. I have resided many years in Alexandria, and I know the country and people well, and therefore the observations I am about to offer are the result of my own personal experience. I have listened with great attention to the speech of M. de Lesseps, and also to the lucid and able statements of Mr. Lange, and I quite concur with both gentlemen as to the value of the undertaking in a commercial point of view. I have no doubt but that as a commercial undertaking it will prove highly advantageous to this great commercial country ; but there are other considerations involved in it, which I think ought not to be lost sight of ; and one of these is, the mode in which this colossal work is to be carried out, and what its effects will be upon the people of Egypt. It is stated in one of the Reports which have been issued under the approval of M. de Lesseps, that, in the event of this great work being carried out, the Viceroy of Egypt will supply the labourers necessary for carrying on the works, and that these labourers are to be supplied from the fellahs of Egypt. Now, it appears to me, that the great desideratum in this project is, the labour, and we are told that that labour is to be supplied by Egypt. We also are told that Saïd Pasha has made a concession to M. de Lesseps, by which to enable him to carry out to completion this monstrous and colossal undertaking. But then, how is it to be accomplished ? If I take up the same view of it as that put forward by M. de Lesseps, I should say, that, in order to carry on the work, no fewer than 100,000 labourers will be required ; and where is that immense number of labourers to be found who will be ready and willing to be employed on the works ? Why, of course, they must be drawn from Egypt. It has been said that this is a work of great ability and of vast national importance. Well, granted that it is so ; but I say that it cannot be carried out by means of free labour, but by means of compulsory labour ; and that if it is to be accomplished by the fellahs of Egypt, the Viceroy will have them forced away from their peaceful homes, and they will be

compelled, against their will, to abandon their families, and to work in this desert, and, in fact, to become to all intents and purposes slaves, just as much as the slaves of the West Indies. These poor people are now employed in their own domestic pursuits, and in cultivating their little farms along the banks of the Nile, and where there are not now anything like a sufficient number of labourers for that purpose; and yet it is proposed to force 100,000 of them to become labourers upon this work which, in fact, has no relation in reality with Egypt. Now, this is the point of view in which I am desirous of placing this undertaking before the commercial world of London, as well as the whole of civilized Europe. The commercial prosperity of this great country has been the wonder of the world, but it has not been achieved by means of slave labour; on the contrary, this country was the first to come forward and liberate the slaves of the West Indies at a cost of millions, and therefore let me ask, will England lend its sanction to the enforcement of slave labour in Egypt, after having paid 20,000,000 sterling for the liberation of slaves in the West Indies? I repeat that if this undertaking is to be carried out as now proposed, it can only be accomplished by Englishmen becoming parties to enforcement of slave labour in Egypt for the next twenty years. Those poor creatures will be compelled to work in the desert, and lead a most miserable existence, and at a distance from 80 to 100 miles from any human habitation. This is the point of view in which I was desirous of placing this undertaking before a body of English merchants, and of showing them, that it is a project more worthy of the time of the Pharaohs than of Englishmen of the nineteenth century. It appears to me to be a work about as feasible as the building of a pyramid; and then, as to the cost of it, I do believe that instead of its being completed for 8,000,000 of money, it will cost, at least, three times that sum; and that so far from it being completed in seven or eight years, I feel perfectly convinced that it will not be completed in twenty or thirty years. We have heard of a somewhat similar undertaking to this having been embarked in on the banks of the Nile, by Mehemet Ali; that work would, no doubt, have conferred many benefits upon Egypt, and it was being carried on vigorously, while I resided there, during the reign of Mehemet Ali, but when he died the work was abandoned; and the very same may be the result of this undertaking. It may be commenced under the reign of Saïd Pasha, and may go on while he lives; but he may die in two or three years time, (for those Viceroys are not very long lived,) and if he should die in about that time, then let me ask what is to become of this undertaking? It may be that his successor would not allow a single man to be employed on the works. I say, then,

that, looking at this project in a philanthropic point of view, I do think it is an undertaking which the commercial world of London will never lend its sanction to, inasmuch as it is an undertaking proposed to be accomplished by slave labour.

Mr. LANGE—The gentleman who has just addressed the meeting has expressed his doubts as to the feasibility of this undertaking, and doubts whether it can ever be carried out; and he has also argued it in a “philanthropic point of view,” and has told the meeting that it cannot be accomplished by any other means than by forced or slave labour. Now, I shall endeavour to meet his objections by stating a few facts. In the first place, that gentleman does not appear to be aware that for the last two or three years every step has been taken for the purpose of ascertaining the feasibility of the project. Nothing has been left undone that the most mature deliberation could suggest for the purpose of arriving at that conclusion. (Hear, hear.) The project was placed before some of the most eminent and skilful engineers in Europe, and those gentlemen went out and made a personal survey of the whole ground to be traversed by the canal, the Viceroy being determined to leave nothing undone, by which to remove any doubt that might exist as to the practicability of the undertaking. And now, in order that this meeting may not entertain any doubt upon the subject, I will mention the names of the engineers who made a report upon the feasibility of the project, and that report speaks for itself. The names of those gentlemen are—

“M. F. W. CONRAD, Chief Engineer of the Water-Staat, of the Hague.

“Captain HARRIS, of the Honourable East India Company’s Navy, London,

“Captain JAURES, of the Imperial Marine, and Member of the Council of the Admiralty, of France.

“M. LENTZE, Chief Engineer of the Works on the Vistula, of Berlin.

“M. LIEUSSOU, Hydrographical Engineer to the Imperial Marine of France, of Paris.

“Mr. J. R. McCLEAN, Civil Engineer, of London.

“Mr. CHARLES MANBY, Civil Engineer, of London.

“M. MONTESINOS, Director of Public Works, of Madrid.

“M. DE NEGRELLI, Inspector-General of Railways in the Austrian Empire, of Vienna.

“M. PALEOCAPA, Minister of Public Works in the kingdom of Sardinia, of Turin.

“M. RENAUD, Inspector-General and Member of the Council for *Ponts et Chaussées*, of Paris.

“Mr. J. M. RENDEL, Civil Engineer, of London.

“M. RIGAUT DE GENOUILLY, Rear-Admiral of the Imperial Marine of France, of Paris.”

Now, I think the names of those gentlemen are a sufficient guarantee of their respectability, and they have one and all repeated that the undertaking is perfectly practicable. (Hear, hear.) And at the meeting held the other day at Bristol, Mr. Slaughter stated that the late Mr. Rendel assured him that he considered the undertaking not only as one of great national importance, but also as one which presented no difficulties whatever which could not be surmounted. (Hear, hear.) So much then for its practicability, and now a word or two with regard to the undertaking in a “philanthropic point of view,” upon which the gentleman has dwelt at so much length. I beg to remind him and the meeting that Egypt, under former dynasties, was a very different country to what it is at the present day, and vast strides have been made there within the last few years towards civilisation and the improvement of the people; and it is only just towards the present Viceroy that I should say that no man could do more for the improvement of his subjects than he has been doing ever since his accession to power. (Hear, hear.) He has recently made a tour of his provinces, and ascertained by his own personal inspection their actual state, and what his people most needed to ameliorate their condition. (Hear, hear.) He has appointed five new governors, and, singular as it may seem, a Christian governor over one of his largest provinces, notwithstanding all the remonstrances of his advisers. (Hear, hear.) I should also state that the taxes, which, under the old regime pressed most heavily upon the people, have undergone a complete revision by the present Viceroy; he has reduced them considerably; he has ordered the Cheiks to watch with care over the wants of his subjects, to treat them kindly, and to collect the taxes with forbearance. In order to arrest over-zeal on the part of these Cheiks in the interest of their master, they have most stringent orders, rather to take the returns for taxes as tendered by the landed proprietors (where a doubt exists) than to expose them to any annoyance, and to select the proper periods for collections,—care being taken that it is not done whilst the men are fully employed at harvest time, so as not to obstruct or distress their labours unnecessarily. He has also brought into action many measures of public utility, all of which show how anxious he is to be of service to his subjects, and improve their social and moral condition. (Hear, hear.) Then, with regard to what Mr. Fowler has said about “Slavery,” and the affecting picture he has drawn of a rude soldiery “dragging the poor people by force from their peaceful homes,” I can only say that those who will be employed on this undertaking will be

free labourers, and none of them need be forced; on the contrary, they will be but too glad to avail themselves of the offer of employment on the works, for the best possible reason, and that is, they will be paid a franc a-day, which is about three times what they are now receiving for their labour at home. (Hear, hear.) Then, again, they are the only class of people who could be employed on the work, for it would be wholly unsuited to our navvies, who would find it impossible to labour beneath the rays of the burning sun of that climate, but to which the natives of the country are inured by nature, and to whom, therefore, the labour and the climate are not distressing. (Hear, hear.) Then, when we consider the magnitude of this undertaking, it is very important that we should have cheap labour, and that we could not have if we were to employ our navvies; but the meeting may be assured that it will be free labour, and not "Slave labour," as Mr. Fowler appears to apprehend. (Hear, hear.) I am happy to be in a position to say that the Viceroy, who is a very old friend of M. de Lesseps, is a man most desirous of improvement and progression; and as to what Mr. Fowler has said about this project being more worthy of the time of the "Pharaohs" and the "Pyramids"—Good heavens! gentlemen—I put it to you, as the representatives of the largest commercial city in the world, is that an argument to advance against this great international enterprise, in this age of science, civilisation, and progression? Shall it go forth to the world that from the body of this meeting such views have found a single echo or supporter? I cannot possibly believe it; nay, more, I feel fully persuaded that there is not a single gentleman present who shares them; and I am really quite at a loss to understand upon what grounds such an argument has been put forward. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. GOODLIFF—Mr. Chairman, I must say that I think we did not come here to-day for the purpose of discussing the details dwelt upon by Mr. Fowler, or what the expense of the undertaking was to be, or by what species of labour it was to be accomplished—all these are matters for future consideration in case we should now agree to the utility of the scheme. (Hear, hear.) At the same time, I think the consideration of the question has taken such a turn as to show us how important it is that such projects should be made the subject of public discussion. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Fowler has certainly placed the subject before the meeting in a somewhat novel point of view; but, if the whole question were to rest upon that issue, I think it would be very easily answered and disposed of. Now, I believe the gentleman will admit that nothing can be desired better calculated to introduce civilization and prosperity amongst such a people as the Egyptians than such great

works as canals and railways. (Hear, hear.) It has been said by a great authority "that commerce was the great civilizer" of the world; and why should not Egypt be made to participate in its advantages? (Hear, hear.) Then, as to the argument about "forced labour," let me ask what amount of "forced labour" was it necessary to employ on the railways now in course of construction in Egypt and India?—(hear, hear);—and yet it is not so long since such undertakings in this country were considered as all chimerical, as was also the great telegraph communication now being laid across the Atlantic Ocean, and which must eventually prove of vast advantage not only to the whole of Europe, but to the whole of the civilized world. (Hear, hear.) I contend that this canal will be found equally beneficial, not only to the great commercial world of London, but to the whole of the East of Europe; and I am happy to say that it is not an undertaking in which the aid of the Government of this country will be required; for in this country all our great commercial enterprises have been undertaken by our commercial men, totally independent of any Government aid, although it would be very desirable that the Government should give its support to a work of such magnitude. But then, we can get on without it, as we have seen in the case of the Euphrates Valley project, which will be a work of the greatest importance in connexion with the commerce of this great metropolis. (Hear, hear.) As to what has been said about the "Fellahs" being at home in peace and comfort, and enjoying themselves under "vines and fig trees"—(laughter)—that is all very well, but still I think they will be found but too ready to be employed on this great work; and that part of Mr. Fowler's argument has, I think, been most satisfactorily disposed of by the plain, straightforward statement of Mr. Lange; and as to comparing the scheme with the works of the great "Pharaohs" of old, and that it was almost to rival the "Pyramids," I am happy to say that it will rival those great works in one essential particular, and that is, in its effects as a work of great utility, and a means of introducing modern civilization amongst the Egyptian people. (Cheers.)

MR. FOWLER—May I be permitted to say a few words in reply? I have not called into question the advantages which Egypt would derive from the introduction of railways or canals into that country; but what I do say is this, that this proposed canal will not run through any part of Egypt; on the contrary, it is nearly 70 or 80 miles from Egypt, or, at least, from the cultivated parts of that country, and therefore it cannot be as beneficial to that country as a railway running right through the centre of it. But this canal is, in fact, to pass through a desert, and will be no benefit whatever to any other place. It

has been stated that the Viceroy will advance, out of his own private resources, the sum of £1,200,000 towards the construction of this canal, and that he will undertake to supply the labourers at the rate of 10d. a-day each. Now, I say that the Viceroy will pay himself back this advance out of the earnings of the Fellahs; and that, so far from receiving 10d. a-day, they will not actually receive more than 1d.; and as to the mode of employing those labourers, I appeal to any gentleman in this room, who knows anything of Egypt, and I ask him, is it not the fact that these poor miserable creatures, these "Fellahs," are dragged away from their homes, and are compelled to work like slaves, and to eke out a most miserable existence? I have known many of them to go a whole day without a morsel of food of any kind. I am now speaking from an experience of ten years' residence in Egypt; although, during that time, it has not been my good fortune to mix with the high and mighty, as M. de Lesseps has, yet my avocations in that country have been such as to enable me to acquire some knowledge of the people, out of their manners and habits, and particularly of the Fellahs; and I say, from what I have seen, that if this undertaking be carried out by means of the labour of the Fellahs, their condition will be worse than that of the slaves of the West Indies ever was. I know that when the Mahmoudieh Canal was in course of construction, the Fellahs were dragged there by force, and many of them left for a whole day without a morsel of food, and were paid not 10d. a day, but 30 para, which was equal to about $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. of our money. I am also aware that the Cairo Railway was constructed by forced labour, and the labourers were not paid more than 2d. a-day.

Mr. ARBUTHNOT—I have the honour to propose a resolution for adoption by this meeting, and I now hold it in my hand, and I do hope it will meet with a cordial and unanimous approval. I have attended here to-day for the purpose of hearing the project explained by M. de Lesseps and Mr. Lange, and I must say, that I have listened to the statements of both these gentlemen with great satisfaction; and as we have heard all that they have had to say upon the subject, it only now remains for this meeting to express an opinion in reference to the project. It is a project of the greatest importance to the commercial interests of this country, and in order to be convinced of that fact it is only necessary to look at the map now before us, and I think it will have the effect of removing all doubt that may exist upon the subject. However, I should mention that there is one very important consideration in connexion with the undertaking which must not be lost sight of, and that is what may be the effect of the project in a political point of view. The question of its effects as a matter of policy

is a very important one, but as it is not necessary to discuss it here to-day, I shall not further allude to it, particularly as the resolution I am about to propose does not bind the meeting to any expression of opinion of a political character.

The resolution is as follows :—

“That the proposed Ship Canal across the Isthmus of Suez having been declared practicable by competent engineers, and all nations having been invited to join in the undertaking, which would not be placed under the exclusive protection of an individual Government; this meeting being perfectly satisfied with the explanations given by M. de Lesseps, considers that the success of the canal will prove eminently advantageous to the commercial interests of Great Britain.”

I beg to say that I have great pleasure in proposing that resolution.

M. DE LESSEPS—Mr. Fowler having appealed to the philanthropical and liberal feelings of the meeting in support of his opposition to the enterprise of the Suez Canal, I feel myself called upon to address you once more, in order to repel this system of attack. I have just been told that Mr. Fowler has inhabited Egypt. I regret that I never had the pleasure of meeting him there, although I have at several periods resided in that country during the last twenty-five years. He confesses that he himself has never approached the person of the Viceroy of Egypt, H. H. Mohammed Saïd Pasha, but, as I have been acquainted with that noble prince from his childhood, I may be permitted to declare that I have met with few persons naturally endowed with more humane sentiments, more generous and more liberal. It is a fact now generally known that he has officially put these sentiments into practice, that he has endowed his country with internal freedom of commerce, that he has completed the enfranchisement of the fellahs, who are now the free owners of the arable soil of Egypt; and few princes in Europe could show, after less than three years' possession of power, so long a list of benefactions and ameliorations destined to increase the well-being and prosperity of the country.

Allusion has been made to the inhuman treatment to which the Egyptian labourers were subjected, to extraordinary mortality arising from ill usage during the execution of works; but the examples are sought for as far back as the Pharaohs; hey are, thank Heaven, without a parallel in the present day.

The regulations decreed by the Viceroy himself as to the government of the workmen who will be summoned to the works of the Suez Canal, are printed in the third volume of documents published by me in England; and I have heard many persons say that, in any country, such a set of regulations might be adopted as a model. The Viceroy pays the workmen he employs for his own, or the public service, as well, and sometimes better, than do private individuals.

There are certain exceptional circumstances under which the population are called upon to perform statute labour, when the requirements of agriculture leave them free; but this is for the repair of the canals, which serve to irrigate their fields, and this labour is a consequence of the physical condition of Egypt. The system of statute labour is, however, still kept up in Europe, and it exists in France under the title of contributions in kind. I will cite, moreover, a conclusive fact in favour of the manner in which great public works are conducted in Egypt.

Some months since it became necessary to enlarge in width and depth, and to render once more navigable, the great Mahmoudieh Canal from Alexandria to the Nile. 115,000 men were employed on this work for a space of 28 days. They turned over 4,000,000 cubic mètres of earth; and so well were they directed by the distinguished engineer charged with the management of the works, and so humanely were they treated under the eyes of the Viceroy, who came in person to inspect their progress, that out of that mass of individuals only five cases of sickness occurred in a thousand, and no mortality whatever.

Mr. LANGE—M. de Lesseps has just explained the mode in which the labourers will be employed, and I beg to assure the meeting, that the apprehensions entertained by Mr. Fowler, that the labour will be forced labour, is perfectly groundless. (Hear, hear.) I believe that forced labour used to be resorted to long ago in Egypt, but that practice has ceased to exist in any aggravated form, and, in fact, it has been found to be quite unnecessary. (Hear, hear.) Then Mr. Fowler has said, that this Canal will not be as beneficial to Egypt as a Railway; but it is not the benefit it is likely to be to that country that we are discussing here to-day; what we are considering is the benefit the undertaking is likely to be to England. (Hear, hear.) And I consider that a strong point in our favour, when it is argued that the benefits to accrue to Egypt are not great. It shows, at least, that no selfish policy on the part of the Viceroy dictated the plan, seeing that on the other hand it is admitted that the canal will be of almost incalculable advantage to this country. (Hear, hear.) It may or may not be of benefit to Egypt, but that is a question for the Viceroy to dispose of, and he knows best how to manage his own affairs. (Hear, hear.)

The meeting has been told by Mr. Arbuthnot, that there is a question of a political character mixed up with it; but that gentleman has very properly observed, that it is one not now under consideration; all we ask of this meeting is, an expression of its opinion as to the utility of the undertaking, and of the value it will prove to the commercial interests of this great country. (Hear, hear.) Should you decide favourably, you will be only confirming that which has already been done by many of the most important commercial towns in this country as well as in Scotland and Ireland; for instance, such as Liverpool, Manchester, Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Newcastle, Hull, Bristol, and Birmingham. At all these towns, favourable resolutions were adopted, and in many, their representatives in Parliament were requested to urge upon the Government of this country the necessity of removing any opposition which may exist, and to aid in bringing the undertaking to a successful issue. Hitherto, the British Government has stood aloof from openly and publicly expressing any opinion, but the Sultan has been influenced by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, at Constantinople, to withhold the ratification of the concession granted by the Viceroy. If any reasons really do exist for adopting such a course, all we ask is, that they be frankly and openly stated, and it will then remain to be seen whether the apprehensions of political phantoms are suffered to delay the immediate accomplishment of a project admitted by the general voice of this country to be of such immense benefit and importance to the commerce of England and of the world. Having thus obtained the aforementioned encouraging resolutions, one last and most important step remained, and we have taken it this day, by coming here to meet you—the bankers, merchants, and shipowners of this vast metropolis, in order to lay our project before you, and to complete the general opinion already expressed by this country with your crowning sanction and approbation. (Mr. Lange sat down amidst loud cheering.)

A VOICE—What is the nature of the concession given by the Viceroy of Egypt?

MR. LANGE—It is a concession granted by the Viceroy to M. de Lesseps to enable him to form a Universal Company for carrying out this project, and in which all countries are invited to join, and to participate in its advantages.

MR. ARBUTHNOT—I trust the resolution I have proposed will meet the unanimous approbation of the meeting.

Captain HARRIS—I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution, and in so doing I shall take the opportunity of saying that I, as a member of the Council, attended the meeting which was held in Paris on this subject; and there the project was most fully discussed and considered in all its bearings.

Every one who heard it described admitted that it was a project which would prove of vast importance to the commerce of the whole of Europe, and it was not approved of until it had passed through the most severe test and ordeal that any undertaking could have been subjected to. (Hear, hear.) That meeting was attended by no fewer than five Ministers of public works from as many Continental countries, and the whole merits of the project were most amply discussed by them, and they then expressed their unanimous and cordial approval of it. (Hear, hear.) Then, with regard to the question as to the Red Sea being navigable, I beg to say that I have formed my judgment upon that point, after having performed no fewer than seventy voyages up and down that Sea, and I have no hesitation in saying that it is just as navigable for sailing vessels as the English Channel, and that, when this canal is open, we shall find that steam vessels will predominate, and that sailing vessels will be very little heard of then. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. ANDERSON—Although I have attended this meeting, it was not my intention to have taken any part in the discussion, although the project is one in which I feel considerable interest; but as I have heard it stated that the Peninsular and Oriental Company have expressed some opposition to this undertaking, I beg to say, on behalf of that Company, as their deputy-chairman, that we have not expressed any opinion adverse to it, for it cannot in any way militate against the interests of that Company. It may, perhaps, be the means of bringing competition to bear against us; but if a company cannot afford to encounter competition it has no business to exist. (Hear, hear.) I have not the least doubt but that, if the undertaking be accomplished, it will prove of great advantage to the commercial interests of this country. (Hear, hear.)

The resolution was then put, and carried, it may be said, unanimously, as there was only one hand held up against it.

The proceedings then terminated with a cordial and unanimous vote of thanks to Sir James Duke.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE ENGLISH MEETINGS IN FAVOUR OF THE SUEZ CANAL.

At the conclusion of these reports of meetings in England, I think may very properly be inserted the following view which has been taken of them in a Parisian publication (*Le Journal de l'Isthme de Suez*) by my learned collaborator, M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire, who, like myself, is wholly devoted to the success of the Suez Canal—and whose name is as honourably known in England as it is in his own country, and throughout all Europe :—

Our anticipations have not been disappointed. Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Hull, Birmingham, and Bristol have pronounced as emphatically in favour of the Suez Canal, as had done Liverpool, Manchester, Dublin, Cork and Belfast. The meeting in the City of London has now expressed the same opinion; and we are henceforth, therefore, enabled to form a judgment of the collective utterance of opinion which has taken place in England. Eighteen meetings, all unanimous, are sufficient to form a judgment of this manifestation, with a complete knowledge of the subject and without the possibility of error.

That which strikes us in the first place, with respect to these meetings, is the perfect loyalty of feeling which invariably was exhibited by really the most striking examples. Not only was the reception warm and kindly, as towards a foreigner, but the public spirit of England rose above all considerations of national interest, however legitimate such may have been, and the question was grasped in all its magnitude and in all its truth. "Certainly the cutting of the Isthmus of Suez will be useful to the commerce of the whole world; and this was the foremost and supreme motive which justified this splendid undertaking. In the second place, the cutting of the Isthmus will be useful in particular to the commerce of Great Britain, because it is Great Britain who holds the richest and

the widest possessions in Asia, and whose connexion with it is the most important and the most extensive." Such was the sense of the English meetings; subordinating, with a magnanimity that does them honour, the interests of England to those of civilization and humanity. One of the meetings, that of the merchants of Edinburgh and Leith, went even further than this, and it was declared that, even should the Mediterranean powers, with France at their head, derive from the Suez Canal advantages relatively superior to those of England, this would afford no ground for withholding her support in the presence of advantages so evident as would accrue to England herself.

Confronted with these manifestations which are so clear, all the ungracious surmises which attribute narrow tendencies to the English mind must fall to the ground. For our own part, these surmises have always appeared to us without the slightest foundation; but we are glad facts should give them so complete a contradiction.

Side by side with this characteristic of the English meetings, we discover a second which is not less worthy of notice and esteem. However self-evident the question, and however sufficient simple good sense may have been to solve it, there existed, nevertheless, in the consideration of its details, as in all affairs, ground for discussion. The reports of these public meetings have shown what has been the nature of this discussion. The long extracts we have given from the local journals show that the Suez question has been discussed in these assemblies of commercial men as it might be in Parliament. The shipowners, the merchants, the manufacturers, the capitalists of Great Britain were certainly the severest judges to whom we could appeal. They have shown themselves to have been at the same time the most competent, and the most enlightened. On our part, the preparatory investigation of the question, scientific and technical, had been pushed as far as was possible; on their part, the commercial and nautical inquiry was as searching as the interests of the world at large required. Science had pronounced with the authority which attaches to her decisions. Another authority, if not higher, one more efficacious, has now pronounced in turn—the authority of practice attesting that the cutting of the Isthmus of Suez, uniting the Mediterranean and Red Seas, responds to a great necessity, and that all delay in the establishment of this new means of communication is a positive injury done to civilized nations.

Competency and loyalty—these are the qualities, therefore, which we find, and which command our admiration in the English meetings.

Add to these their unanimity, which is an additional guarantee not only of the weight which their resolutions must possess,

but of their now incontrovertible truth. Is it possible for any one to contend with sincerity that eighteen meetings of Englishmen have been mistaken as to a point of English interests? And when we find that all, from one end of the United Kingdom to the other, have replied with such admirable concord, may we not without the least hesitation refer to these indefeasible expressions of adherence as a proof that the truth is on our side? It is not we that are judges in our own cause, a position which must always be suspicious, however respectable it may be in many cases; our judges have been such as nothing could corrupt, and in whose decisions there has been no divergence.

We have no wish to overrate our success, indeed it would be difficult to do so, seeing that it has been as complete as could possibly be. It may be allowed us, however, to feel honoured in such a result. We may thank the intelligence of a great nation that it has so thoroughly appreciated a work which in the main is for its benefit more than for that of any other; but which had been held up to it as fraught with danger, as a snare spread for it by the hostility of rivals. There is nothing so effectual as public discussion to dissipate clouds of this kind, and we sincerely hope, therefore, that politicians will listen to this appeal, and will not hesitate to ratify what an English journal recently termed with equal truth and felicity—"The PLEBISCITUM on the Suez question."

BARTHÉLEMY ST. HILAIRE.

LETTER TO LORD STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE.—
NOTES ON EGYPT AND TURKEY.

This collection of documents, which is addressed to those who take a part in the politics of their country, might be considered defective did I not set before my readers the elements on which have been based the political discussions which have taken place on the question of the Suez Canal.

It has been said, that to cut through the African Isthmus would threaten England's dominion in India ; and it has been sought, in reference to this subject, to awaken the former misgivings of England as to the designs of France.

Secondly.—The Suez Canal has been represented as likely to loosen the ties existing between Egypt and Turkey, and lead to the eventual independence of Egypt.

Lastly.—Instead of candidly acknowledging the real motives of an opposition spontaneous in its origin, pretexts have been advanced founded on the assumed interests of Turkey ; and the responsibility of the Opposition has been laid to the members of the Divan, who, on their side, have repudiated it,—both in their correspondence which has been communicated to me, and in conversations with the representatives of foreign Governments, who have not feared to make the Sultan acquainted with their strong sympathy.

The three questions of the relative position of France and England in respect of the Suez Canal, of the situation of Egypt with reference to Turkey,

and of the interest of Turkey in the cutting of the Isthmus of Suez, have already been treated. The first in the subjoined letter, which I had the honour of addressing at the commencement of the undertaking to Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe; the other two in notes, which I have reproduced here in order to complete the documents submitted to the impartial judgment of my readers.



LETTER ADDRESSED TO LORD STRATFORD DE
REDCLIFFE, HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S AMBAS-
SADOR AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

Pera, 28th February, 1855.

There are questions which require to be boldly met in order to be well resolved, as there are wounds which must be opened in order to be healed. The frankness with which you received my first remarks upon a subject the gravity of which I do not affect to disguise, encourages me to submit to your consideration a point of view from which it appears to me advisable to contemplate the question of the Isthmus of Suez. The great influence which your character and your long experience naturally give you the right to exercise in the decisions of your Government in all Eastern questions, makes me especially anxious to neglect no opportunity of enabling your Excellency to form an opinion from a perfect acquaintance with the case.

K

The results already obtained from the intimate alliance of France and England, testify sufficiently to the advantages that the European balance and civilization in general derive from that union of the two peoples. The future and the welfare of all the nations of the universe are therefore concerned in maintaining intact, in preserving from any attack, a state of things which, to the everlasting honour of the Governments that have brought it about, can alone, with time, ensure the blessings of progress and of peace to the human race. Thence the necessity of getting rid, beforehand, of all causes of rupture, or even of coolness, between the two peoples; thence, consequently, the paramount duty of anticipating amongst future contingencies those circumstances calculated to awake ancient feelings of antagonism; and to raise, in the bosom of either nation, those emotions against the violence of which the wisdom of Governments is powerless to struggle. The motives for hostile rivalry are tending successively to give place to that generous emulation which gives birth to great things.

Looking at the situation of affairs in a general way, it is scarcely to be perceived upon what ground and upon what occasion those struggles which so long desolated the world could be renewed. Is it financial and commercial interests that could cause division between the two peoples? Why, British capital thrown into all the undertakings of France, and the immense development of international commerce, have established ties between them which become closer every day. Is it political interests and questions of principle? Why, the two nations have but one common aim, one same ambition—the triumph of right over might, of civilization over barbarism. Is it, finally, the sordid jealousy of territorial extension? Why, they acknowledge, at the present time, that the globe is vast enough to offer to the spirit of adventure that animates their respective populations, countries to make available, human beings to withdraw from the state of barbarism; and, moreover, from the moment that their flags wave together, the conquests of the one profit by the activity of the other.

At the first glance, then, nothing is perceived in the general state of affairs that could impair our cordial relations with England.

If, however, we look closer, an eventuality presents itself which, causing the most enlightened and most moderate cabinets to partake in popular prejudices and passions, is capable of reviving old antipathies, and of compromising, with the alliance, the benefits to be derived from it.

There is, in fact, a point of the globe with the free passage of which the political and commercial power of Great Britain is bound up, a point, the possession of which France had, on her

part, aspired to in former times. This point is Egypt, the direct route from Europe to India; Egypt, bathed once and again with French blood.

It is superfluous to define the motives which would not allow England to see Egypt in the possession of a rival nation without opposing it by the most energetic resistance; but what should also be taken into serious consideration is, that with less positive interests, France, under the dominion of her glorious traditions, under the impression of other feelings more instinctive than rational, and therefore more powerful over the impressionable spirit of her inhabitants, would not, in her turn, leave to England the peaceable sovereignty of Egypt. It is clear that, so long as the route to India is open and certain, that the state of the country ensures the facility and promptitude of the communications, England will not set about creating the most grave difficulties by appropriating a territory which, in her eyes, has no other value than as a means of transit. It is likewise evident that France—whose policy, for the last fifty years, has been to contribute to the prosperity of Egypt, both by her counsels and by the concourse of a great number of Frenchmen distinguished in the sciences, in administrative capacity, in all the arts of peace or war—will not seek to realize, in this direction, the projects of another epoch, so long as England does not interfere.

But let one of those crises occur which have so often shaken the East, let a circumstance arise wherein England should find herself under the rigorous necessity of taking a position in Egypt to prevent another power from forestalling her, and tell us then if it is possible that the alliance could survive the complications which such an event would occasion. And why should England consider herself obliged to become mistress of Egypt, even at the risk of breaking her alliance with France? For this single reason, that Egypt is the shortest and most direct route from England to her Eastern possessions; that this route must be constantly open to her; and that, in whatever concerns this mighty interest, she could never temporize. Thus, from the position given to her by nature, Egypt might still become the subject of a conflict between France and Great Britain; so that this chance of rupture would disappear if, by a providential event, the geographical conditions of the ancient world were changed, and that the commercial route to India, instead of passing through the heart of Egypt, were removed to its confines, and, being opened to all the world, could never be exposed to the chance of its becoming the exclusive privilege of any one.

Well, this even, which must have been the design of Providence, is now within the reach of man. It may be brought about by human skill. It is to be realized by the cutting of the Isthmus of Suez, an undertaking to which nature opposes

no obstacle, and wherein English capital, as well as that of other countries, will certainly take part.

Let the Isthmus be cut through, let the waves of the Mediterranean mingle with those of the Indian Ocean, let the railroad be continued and completed, and Egypt, in acquiring an increased importance as a productive country, as a country of internal commerce, as a general storehouse and common transit, loses its dangerous pre-eminence as an uncertain and contested passage of communication. The possession of its territory being no longer an object of interest to England, ceases to be a possible bone of contention between that power and France, the union of the two peoples is for the future unalterable, and the world is preserved from the calamities which a rupture between them would produce. This result affords such securities for the future, that it is sufficient to point them out to attract to the undertaking destined to produce it the sympathy and the encouragement of the statesmen whose efforts are directed to the settlement of the Anglo-French alliance upon an immoveable basis. You, my lord, are one of those statesmen, and you have too large a share in questions of high policy, to which I am a stranger, for me not to entertain the wish to communicate to you my aspirations.

FERD. DE LESSEPS.

TURKEY'S INTEREST IN THE PIERCING OF THE ISTHMUS.

Interests of the highest order connect themselves as regards Turkey with the success of this enterprise; a political interest—a religious interest—a commercial interest—and a financial interest.

The political interest is clearly defined by the position of affairs thus created, which adds to the stability of the empire by conferring upon it a new maritime passage, the independence of which it will be as much the interest of Europe to maintain, as it was to guard the neutrality of the ancient passage of the Dardanelles. The integrity of the Ottoman empire, inscribed in the treaties, which in the end are often effective only through such permanent agreement as may be founded in the interests of the contracting Powers, acquires a much more complete consecration in the necessity of the facts, and in the indispensable conditions of the equilibrium of the world. The Powers of Europe had an interest in defending it; henceforward this interest will be twofold. The Grand Signor becomes the guardian of the two most important political and commercial positions in the world—the passage from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, and the passage from the Mediterranean to the Asiatic and Austral seas. Held in the same hand, these two passages lend a mutual support to each other—a mutual guarantee. They consolidate and sanction, under one sceptre, the neutrality of the empire which this twofold position definitely incorporates in the balance of European Powers. As the European Powers will never consent to see the Suez Canal in the possession, or under the domination of any single power among them, Egypt can never, in any case, be used as a makeweight or compensation; and thus will be scattered the vision of certain statesmen, who, in order to obtain a share in the spoil, contemplate one day inducing Europe to consent to the partition of the Ottoman empire.

The policy of exclusive conquests seems to have had its day; but let us suppose that the world should fall back into its former track, what are the dangers the Ottoman empire would have to watch for and combat? Against the North it would have to defend Constantinople—against the West it would have to guard Egypt. These are the two weights of the balance; for it must not be forgotten that from the commencement of the century, on two memorable occasions the partition of the

Ottoman empire was proposed by the same ambitious Power, first to France, then to England—the conditions of the bargain being Constantinople on one side, and Egypt on the other.

Recent events have proved that Turkey would not be left single in repelling any attack upon Constantinople. As regards the West, we know that France and England could never be brought to agree to the possession of Egypt by either one of them. But how great a difference in the degree of security would result if, instead of a National question between these two Powers it became a European; if by the possession of a neutral highway between the two wealthiest seas on the face of the globe, the situation of Egypt under the suzerainty of the Sultan acquired the joint guarantee of Austria, interested in the prosperity of the Adriatic and the development of her maritime commerce—Italy and France for the sake of their ports in the Mediterranean; England for her communications with India and Australia; Spain for her colonial possessions and her coast line on the Mediterranean; Holland for her interests in Sumatra, Java, and Borneo; the United States of America for the sake of a saving of three thousand leagues in the navigation between her Atlantic ports and the Austral ocean?

Let us add, that, through all the interests staked in the maintenance of the *status quo*, the Suez Canal is destined still more closely to connect Egypt with the rest of the empire. All antagonism between the vassal and the suzerain may be set at rest for ever, not only through the considerations of external bearing we have just pointed out, but by the still more powerful motive of internal policy. For, indeed, since the Suez Canal will constitute a material proof of a principle sometimes overlooked, namely, that the prosperity and power of Egypt are essential elements in the vitality of Turkey, the fidelity of the vassal will be the more effectively insured that the partisans of a policy which would weaken the power of Egypt will have lost all its influence in the counsels of the Porte.

The enlightened portion of the Turks, far from taking alarm at such a position of affairs, perceive on the contrary in the consequences attending the opening of the Suez Canal, a pledge of future security; for what above all would fill them with apprehension, would be to find themselves exposed on the side of the European Powers to such dangerous eventualities as we have just pointed out, and they will always choose rather to see Egypt governed in an exceptional manner by Mussulman princes of Turkish race, and bound by every tie of a common policy and religion to the metropolis.

As regards the present Viceroy of Egypt, Mohammed Saïd, in his communications with Turkish statesmen on the occasion of the attempt made to awaken jealousy of his designs, the language

held by him was as follows :—"In the present state of affairs a prince holding the government of Egypt, and harbouring secret designs, would not permit the execution of the Suez Canal. The whole coast from Damietta to the first ports on the Syrian shore is at present beyond the ken of any foreign vigilance, and removed from the track of ordinary European navigation. There is nothing to prevent the Viceroy on any given occasion from preparing armaments, collecting troops without exciting attention from without, and pouring his forces into Syria before even the thought of preventing landing could be entertained. Were the Suez Canal in existence the case would be entirely different.

"Moreover, the important possessions of Turkey in Arabia might easily be starved out by Egypt, who is charged with the supply of wheat to them. Germs of revolt certainly exist among them, which it would be very easy for Egypt to foster and encourage; and which she alone, with the present means of communication could prevail over. Experience has already demonstrated that the greatness of the distance and the difficulties of obtaining means of transport will not permit Turkey to send into Arabia with sufficient regularity, or in adequate numbers, the forces necessary to insure the ascendancy of her power. Lastly, it has been alleged that the canal would act as a barrier between Egypt and Turkey. All acquainted with the country must be convinced that, physically, the separation between Turkey and Egypt is much more complete by the intervention of the desert than it will be when the canal is executed, along which tribes of Syrian and Egyptian cultivators will settle."

Remarkable as these words are for their loyalty, they are not the less so for their striking truth.

We shall soon see that in this question the political interest is strengthened by the religious interest, and that, in more than one instance, the one is based on the other. The power of the Sultans, as successors of the Kalifs, is at one and the same time a political power and a supreme pontificate. The Grand Signor is the head and the defender of the Mussulman faith, and, at the same time, sovereign over the territory of which his states are composed. No one can be ignorant of the importance attached by the Faithful to the possession of "the Holy Cities," regarded by them as an essential condition of the spiritual authority of the Sultan; but equally well known are the difficulties and delays attending the present means of intercommunication between Turkey and Arabia, the immense tracts to be toiled through, the deserts to be crossed, whenever a sufficient force for the maintenance of a necessary supremacy has to be despatched.

The opening of the Suez Canal will cause all these obstacles to disappear; Constantinople will be able to communicate in a few days with the coast of Arabia; a ship route always practi-

cable, and of easy navigation, will render it possible to provide for every emergency, and will really place the sanctuaries of the faith again within the direct action of the Sovereign Pontiff.

The execution of the enterprise decided on by the Viceroy of Egypt will, moreover, facilitate and multiply, to the advantage of the Sultan's authority, one of the most dearly-cherished acts of the Mussulman faith, and will deliver the subjects of the empire from the dangers of the holy pilgrimage signalized, under the present state of things, by the human bones which yearly whiten the track of the caravans. In a more indirect, but not less real manner, the Suez Canal will render the same service to the Mussulman populations of Asia and of Eastern and Central Africa. By connecting the two seas, it introduces into the Red Sea, and places at the disposal of the hajis of those countries, the numerous and well-perfected means of communication now existing in the Mediterranean, and it attaches by closer bonds to the Sultan's influence tribes who already recognise and respect his religious supremacy. It would be a mistake to believe that a very important effect might not be produced in this direction beneficial to the future condition of the Government of the Grand Signor.

As regards the commercial question, Turkey will reap from the union of the two seas advantages no less evident than in a political and religious point of view. Without going back to the memorials of old Byzantium, we may recall that Constantinople was, at certain epochs of the middle ages, one of the great entrepôts of the trade between the West and the East. By the Euphrates, and across the high plateaux of Asia, she received the productions of India and the silk goods of China; and the raw produce of the East, embarked at the ports of the Red Sea, was warehoused on the shores of the Bosphorus. The Venetians and Genoese were the merchants by whom this traffic was carried on.

By perfected means of communication, by the facility for various combinations of routes, the piercing of the Isthmus must offer to the trade and navigation of Constantinople a still more productive career. One material fact will sufficiently exhibit the advantages which this city may justly expect from the new route. Of all the great European ports, Constantinople is that which the Ship Canal brings nearest to India and China, whereas at present it is the most remote; it is now 6,000 leagues from Bombay. This distance will be reduced to 1,800; it is 5,600 leagues by sea from Arabia, and it will only be 400; it will become as a necessary consequence the entrepôt of a portion of the trade which will be established between the eastern seas and the Euxine, and some notion of what their traffic will be may be formed when it is remarked, that Trebizond and Odessa are less distant from Suez than Trieste and Marseilles.

It is needless to say, that this curtailment of distance is applicable to all the ports of the Ottoman empire, in Asia Minor, in Syria, and in the Archipelago. By the mouths of the Danube, Constantinople extends her commercial influence into the centre of Hungary and Germany, and the Moldo-Wallachian provinces acquire new elements of prosperity.

Lastly, Turkey, now excluded from the rich exchanges carried on by the navigation following the great routes round Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope, will be able to take an active share in them, even in the present state of her navy, when the highway for these exchanges shall be the Red Sea rendered accessible by the Suez Canal to the coasting vessels of the Mediterranean.

We are here only laying down the immediate results of the canal, independently of the additional expansion which will be given to them by the sagacious interest of merchants, and the enlightened solicitude of the Government for the well-being and advancement of its people. In a financial point of view, the enterprise of the Suez Canal will offer an important revenue to Turkey, without exposing her to the smallest burden, and without seeking from her any guarantee of interest for the capital which augments the riches of the empire. The deed of concession stipulates that a share of fifteen per cent. shall be reserved on the net profits of the enterprise and paid to the Egyptian Government, which on its own side has offered an equal division with the Imperial treasury. According to moderate calculations, such an allotment would constitute a revenue of not less than about £200,000.

The considerations above set forth appear to us calculated to revive confidence in those of our adherents who had been alarmed by recent numerous accusations of a not very favourable disposition, in certain high functionaries of the Porte, towards the glorious enterprise of the Viceroy of Egypt. We know of no other opposition at Constantinople than that of the English Ambassador—an opposition which we had thought it our duty to point out; but which, though it first commenced in 1854, has never manifested itself by any official course. As to the functionaries of the Porte, we have never received from them other than marks of good-will, nor should we forget that a Vizirial letter has been received by the Viceroy of Egypt approving the principle of our enterprise, regarded as of the most useful character to the empire, and the early execution of which, recognised as easy by engineering skill, and insured by a sufficiency of capital, can no longer meet with any serious obstacle.

FERD. DE LESSEPS.

25th October, 1856.

GENERAL VIEWS RESPECTING EGYPT, AND HER POLITICAL RELATION TO TURKEY.

If we attentively consider the peculiar condition of those countries which constitute the Ottoman Empire, it will be impossible not to be at once struck by the exceptional position in which Egypt stands.

The population of Egypt bears no analogy to that of the rest of the empire. It is neither Turkish, Greek, nor Arab. The present inhabitants of the valley of the Nile are the same race of people as the Egyptians under the Pharaohs. To have sojourned only a short time among them is sufficient to remove all doubt on the subject. Bodily conformation, intellectual characteristics, manners, prejudices, all have continued almost unchanged as in the ancient race; and those revolutions which have so frequently altered the political face of Egypt have not perceptibly modified the primitive type of the ancient population.

When we say this, we leave it to be inferred that the Egyptians of the present day have inherited both the good qualities and the defects of the Egyptians of remoter times. Now, commencing with the records contained in Holy Scriptures, all historical documents concur in describing, in exactly the same terms, the main features of the national character. The Egyptian has this peculiarity in common with all other individuals of Ethiopian origin, that while in his general disposition he is unstable, listless, and gentle, he becomes at times obstinate, energetic, and inspired by the most violent passions. By a singular contrast, he unites to much intelligence a degree of improvidence and recklessness of his interests which frequently exceed all bounds; to an easy temper and generally sociable disposition, a natural repugnance for all that has a foreign origin; and to an almost passive submission to power when directly exercised, a strong propensity to disregard all authority exerted from a distance.

Both ancient and modern history teach us that by their inborn bravery, their handiness in the most dissimilar employments, and their vigour of action, the Egyptians are capable of great things. But it is an indispensable condition that they should

be subjected to a government fitted to their natural disposition, and directed by a firm and skilful hand. Abandoned to their own guidance, left to the action of their own free will, they lack the originating faculty, the inner spring and impulse outward to better their condition, and the sense of duty is rarely sufficient in them to compensate for the absence of these qualities.

In juxtaposition with the indigenous population, and surrounding them on all sides, are the Arabs of the desert. This contiguity is frequently the source of sanguinary collisions and of ruin to the bordering lands, whenever the ruling power is incapable of protecting them against the depredations of the wandering tribes.

Thus, then, improvidence, instability of character, necessitating the constant control and guidance of a ruling power; traditional insubordination to all authority which seems unaccompanied by efficient force and spontaneous power of action; together with certain vicious tendencies requiring to be curbed—such are the main elements to be taken into account in forming a judgment on the moral and social condition of the Egyptian population.

The circumstances in the order of physical influences in which Egypt is placed are not less remarkable.

Egypt, it is well known, is one of the most fertile countries on the face of the globe. The abundance and variety of the crops its soil produces have passed into a proverb, and for a long succession of ages its political importance has in a great measure depended on its importance as a growing country. Albeit, contrary to what is observed in all other countries favoured by nature, the fecundity of the soil is, in Egypt, indissolubly connected with a solitary and exceptional fact—the existence of the Nile, whose annual overflow refreshes and fertilises the land. Deprived of these inundations, Egypt would be merely a desert. It owes its being entirely to the Nile; and the tenure of its existence is held by virtue of the phenomenon of its periodical inundations, the recurrence of which is fortunately as regular as are the revolutions of the planets.

Of itself, however, the stream extends its beneficial influence little further than its actual banks, and naturally its waters bathe an extent of land shut up within narrow limits. Hence arises the necessity of adopting artificial processes to eke out and direct its waters, so that they should spread to the most distant portions of the territory; hence is urgently required a vast system of canals, dykes, and dams, the due maintenance of which cannot be neglected for one single day, without entailing, as a consequence, the sterility and ruin of a portion, more or less wide, of Egypt. Now, it must be admitted as certain, that works like these, requiring a general study of the collective

wants of the country, large means of execution and considerable advances of capital, would be never accomplished if left to the indifference of individuals, whose resources of every description would, moreover, be too scanty to secure their execution. To the Administration alone, therefore, does the task fall to provide for their accomplishment.

Here, then, we have a vast country, a rich land, not merely the prosperity but the very existence of which depends entirely on the good or ill-will, the strength or weakness, of the Power which rules over its destinies. To follow out such a state of things into its consequences is not difficult. We shall content ourselves, however, with remarking, that, under the government of the Mamelukes, the canals of Egypt were, for the most part, filled up, the means of irrigation almost entirely destroyed, the population dwindling, and the sources of production very nearly dried up.

Lastly, the geographical position of Egypt invests it in the eyes of the world with an importance which is assignable to no other section of the Ottoman empire. Standing on the confines of Africa and of Asia, washed on one side by the Red Sea, and on the other by the Mediterranean, Egypt presents the shortest and the most direct route between the West and the extreme East; it forms a central point in the immensely ramified relations which bind together in the present day Europe, the Indies, China, and Oceania. When the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope had laid open a rival path of communication, for a long series of years the path struck out by Vasco de Gama was seen to bear away from Egypt the stream of trade with China and the Indies. But the route by the Cape was not at that time preferred, because it avoided the necessity of transshipments, and because it presented to the shippers of those days the inducement of a saving of time and money. It was not for those reasons only, all powerful as they were, that the choice was made; there was, in addition, a positive compulsion for commerce to adopt it, for the simple motive that the route through Egypt had become no longer practicable.

The state of anarchy which, except during rare intervals, had never ceased to lay waste this country from the commencement of the fifteenth century, the internal commotions of which it had constantly been the theatre, the fanaticism and inhospitable practices of its rulers, had raised up a barrier which the trade of that day, alarmed at the absence of all security, no longer sought to pass. Egypt, from its geographical position, naturally presents the most advantageous channel for all communication between the West and the East, and this is a privilege of which it can never be stripped, so long as its internal condition does not destroy or counteract what nature has established. A proof

of this is, that since order has been restored in that country, and the interests of foreigners have become the object of intelligent and well-maintained protection, the route through Egypt has been once more opened to the commerce of the world. In this respect Egypt has already regained in part the importance which she had forfeited, and this importance will be the more effectual, and the interests of all commercial nations the more securely guaranteed, as the efforts of an enlightened Government commanding sufficient resources will have rendered the passage easier and safer.

From the fact of Egypt being distinguished by a population whose character is peculiar to itself, by physical conditions which belong to her alone, and by a geographical position which cause the greatest interests to converge towards her, we may conclude that she contains within herself the elements of power, and at the same time of decay; with necessities, social impulses, a mode of existence, in short, which are her own, and shared by no other country. This explains how it has happened that Egypt has never continued in the state of a mere province, whatever may have been the power under whose sceptre conquest had brought her.

On every occasion when Egypt has been by chance reduced to the condition of a mere province, that is to say, placed under the same mode of government as other possessions, there has invariably arisen this alternative—either the sources of its prosperity have been choked up by a system of administration not adapted to its necessities, or else it has recovered its independence either on account of the weakness and incapacity of the mother country, or through the desertion of governors skilful enough to turn the resources of the country to their own aggrandisement.

What has been the spectacle presented since the conquest of Egypt, by the Sultan Selim in 1517? His son and successor, Solyman, the legislator, was, without doubt, a prince of consummate ability and experience. He had judiciously come to the conclusion that Egypt was a country requiring to be governed in a peculiar way; but he fell into a mistake upon one point—in assigning too narrow limits to the authority of the Pachas sent to Cairo to fill the office of Governors. In placing them in a position which was precarious, and without any solid basis, he deprived them of the influence and credit necessary to resist efficaciously secret plottings, factions, and the spirit of rebellion, the germ of which is always in existence somewhere in Egypt. The Mamelukes took advantage of this circumstance to seize the supreme power, and became in reality masters of the country. The Ottoman governors soon ended by being nothing more than their prisoners, and the Porte, deprived of all power of inter-

vening in the administration of Egypt, reduced to the promise of a slight tribute, which was, in fact, never paid, maintained during more than 200 years a merely nominal authority over the conquest of Selim.

General Bonaparte commenced at the base of the Pyramids the destruction of the government of the Beys, the worst of all those which had oppressed Egypt. On the departure of the French army, the Ottoman troops installed Turkish governors in the cities. But the Sublime Porte had not recovered effectual possession of the country. Disorder still reigned to such a degree that the representatives of the sovereign found themselves bereft of all active power. It may be said, that Mehemet Ali restored her in the plenitude of her resources and with all her social value, to such effect that she was in a position to furnish the mother country with useful aid in the shape of troops and subsidies.

But, is it to be believed that Mehemet Ali, notwithstanding his eminent qualities, could have accomplished this result had he been invested with a merely temporary and limited authority? Had he been simply the governor of a province, would he have succeeded in crushing the disjointed bands, still instinct with life, of Circassian soldiery; in keeping down the leaven of anarchy, which was traceable in every shape; in putting a stop to the depredations arising from a state of brigandage which had lasted for centuries; in triumphing over the formidable insurrection which, in 1824, kindled over Upper Egypt; in restoring the holy cities to the veneration of Mussulmans, and re-establishing order and regular industry, so long banished from the land; in repairing and extending to previously-unknown proportions the canals in the valley of the Nile; in giving such an impulse to agriculture as multiplied tenfold the commercial activity of Egypt? Could he, in short, as the mere governor of a province, have founded the active and vigilant administration which, by establishing internal peace and public security on solid foundations, has opened Egypt once more to the exploring spirit of travellers, to the investigations of science, to the enterprise of foreign trade, and to the important intercommunication of England with India.

To obtain results so marvellous, Mehemet Ali had need, besides his genius, of a permanent and uncontested authority, complete liberty of action, and forty years of effort and labour directed towards the same end. He required even more than this; and why should we hesitate to declare it? He required to feel an inward conviction that the task he had commenced would be continued by his family, and that he was working for posterity.

It follows clearly, from the facts we have just set forth, and

their natural consequences, that Egypt can never enjoy internal peace, nor behold the complete development of its resources—will never be to the mother country a secure possession nor a useful adjunct—if it be not endowed with institutions suited to its moral condition, with a system of administration especially adapted to its wants, and with a Government possessing, together with relative independence, guarantees of power and durability.

The exceptional position of Egypt, and the necessity of providing for it by the equally exceptional constitution of the local authority, have already been admitted by the statesmen of Europe and of Turkey. That formal expression of the Imperial wisdom, the Hatti Scherif of 1841, advised by the great Powers, was issued with the object of consecrating the principle by its practical application.

Accordingly, in the Hatti Scherif, the whole question is clearly settled. Without abolishing the rights of the Sultan, it attributes a large share of power to Egypt, and to the Prince-vassal governing it, since it establishes according to its precise terms—

1. That the Government of Egypt be made hereditary in favour of Mehemet Ali and his descendants.

2. That the Viceroy of Egypt possess the right to maintain a native army.

3. That, in consideration of a fixed annual tribute to the Sultan, the Viceroy shall retain the entire collection and management of the revenues of Egypt.

Setting aside certain defects, attributable, no doubt, to the suspicions which still survive a recent crisis, it is but just to acknowledge that the Imperial Act of 1841 has constituted the Egyptian Government in a manner which has conciliated the most varied interests. A monument of the generous motives which actuated the Sultan then reigning, it ensures to Egypt the free development of all the germs of prosperity which lie hidden within her, and to the Sublime Porte the enjoyment of all those advantages which the reservations of Solymán had caused her to lose. The conflict of opposing interests is, therefore, no longer possible, and the calamities which would naturally spring therefrom need no longer be feared, while the spirit in which this great measure was conceived is loyally observed. Hitherto the evidence of the fidelity of the vassal, on the one hand, and on the other the wisdom of the sovereign, have been successful in warding off the practical effects of those imperfections in the Hatti Scherif of which we have just spoken. Whenever the Viceroy has clearly demonstrated to the Sultan the necessity of not applying to the letter certain minor provisions which would be useless or even noxious to the interests of Egypt and of the

empire rightly understood, his requests have always been conceded; and in the same manner he has, without hesitation, voluntarily increased the amount of tribute originally determined, and on certain occasions has furnished extraordinary subsidies.

The Hatti Scherif limited the number of Egyptian troops to 18,000 men. The Porte, however, has in practice allowed the successors of Mehemet Ali to raise this number to a far higher amount; and it has had reason to congratulate itself on the result; for at the moment when the late war broke out, the 60,000 Egyptian soldiers constituting the effective force of the army was enabled to supply Turkey with a contingent of 40,000 men.

Lastly, we find it laid down in the Hatti Scherif that the laws and regulations for the administration of public government emanating from the Sublime Porte shall have force in Egypt. Applied in all its stringency, this provision might have served as a pretext for annulling a part of the essential concessions stipulated for in the interest of good government in Egypt.

Under the government of Abbas Pasha, the predecessor of Mahommed Saïd, negotiations were established before the Imperial divan and the Viceroy, on the subject of certain points of the Tanzimat, the execution of which in Egypt, it was feared by the latter, might be followed by serious disadvantages. Without entering into a statement of the arguments employed on either side, we will call to mind that, thanks to the enlightened intervention of statesmen devoted to the interests of their country, the Sultan, with his deep sense of equity, decided that Egypt was in the right. An express exemption from the articles in question was granted in favour of the local government, and all difficulties were thus smoothed.

The discussions which arose on this occasion brought to light the fact that there exists a party by whom the institution of a government of exceptional form in Egypt is looked upon with regret, and who would feel extremely disposed to pervert in practice the spirit of the act of 1841. We allude to certain reformers, persons no doubt actuated by sincere motives, but so absolute in their theories, that they are bent on all occasions in following up their application at the risk of the most serious disasters. Their principle is unity of organization in the Ottoman Empire, or, in point of fact, administrative centralization on the model of the system practised in France. It never enters their minds that France, with its eighty-six departments all within one boundary, its compact and homogenous population, is quite another thing than the Ottoman Empire, composed of various countries and races. Unity exists in France, and centralization has produced these excellent results; therefore they

would bestow on Turkey the same unity and the same centralization. Starting from this point, they would retreat before no obstacle, falter before no danger, in bringing every section of the empire under the level of a system of uniform administration as though the only real and comprehensive unity obtainable by a state composed of dissimilar elements were not a unity of results rather than of means, as though the most effective centralization for a monarchy so constituted did not reside in the active and ever-ready concurrence of all the national forces, developed in accordance with their separate natures and conformably with the peculiar laws of their existence.

In striving to diminish the share of independent authority and restrict the freedom of action which are justly assigned to the Government of Egypt, the injury sustained would not be limited to that Government, but the mother country herself would find cause to regret measures so rash.

For, indeed, if the chief of the Government be in the smallest degree actuated by a sense of his duty, and a consciousness of the responsibility which rests upon him in the eyes of the entire world, no less than in those of his suzerain; if he have only the slightest consideration for the great and numerous interests which depend on the good order and internal tranquillity of the country confided to his care, he will regard it as an imperious obligation not to accept blindly any measures, the effect of which would be to infringe those rights from which he derives the power necessary to the worthy fulfilment of his trust. He will oppose, as experience has already taught us, a moral resistance to acts which are of a nature to weaken in his hands those means of action which it had previously been thought proper and useful to place at his disposal. His fidelity would not for an instant be shaken; and, far from giving rise to any doubts as to the loyalty of his intentions, his very resistance would be the strongest pledge of his devotion to the common weal. But it is not the less true that, should any difference spring up between the mother country and Egypt, if the assemblage of the Ottoman forces should for a time become loosened; if there should occur a divergence of views and efforts, nothing in the present condition of Turkey would be more prejudicial to the public welfare.

One might conceive indeed, up to a certain point, that the exclusive partisans of centralization should consent to run some risk in order to establish their system, if finally the Ottoman Empire were to reap any great advantages; and that a more direct intervention in the administration of Egypt could procure to the Sublime Porte resources superior to those which are ensured to her by the present order of things. But there is no room even for a hope of such results, and to try this needs no

new experiment. We know what Egypt brought to Turkey when it was governed by pashas from Constantinople—the reckoning is easily cast up. As to any military force, it was useless even to think of drawing supplies from Egypt, the inhabitants of which only took up arms to plunder travellers, or turn them against each other.

And now at the present day, this same Egypt regularly, and sometimes in advance, pours into the Imperial coffers an annual tribute, which, deducting all administrative expenses, amounts to not less than £180,000. To this large contribution is added on many occasions voluntary gifts, the total amount of which forms an important sum.

Moreover, during the late war Egypt was enabled, without any diminution of the public forces necessary for the protection and internal police of the country, to furnish to the Sublime Porte a considerable contingent of brave and disciplined soldiers, who fought gloriously on the banks of the Danube and in the Crimea, as well as a naval squadron composed of several frigates and other vessels, some of which shared in the disaster at Sinope. Nor is this all; forty thousand muskets, and stores, and ammunition of all descriptions were withdrawn from the magazines and arsenals of Cairo and Alexandria to be offered to the mother country.

In all the mosques in Egypt the prayers are in the name of the Sultan, and his cypher is inscribed on the standards of the native army. The canal from the Nile to Alexandria, the greatest monument of modern Egypt, and the "barrage" of the Nile, proclaim loudly enough, in the names which have been given them, under what monarchs they were executed. The actual and obligatory payment of tribute to the Sublime Porte, the prevalence of external symbols, all attest and solemnly proclaim, at the present day in Egypt, the sovereignty of the Sultan.

This comparison of the present with the past is sufficiently conclusive in its suggestions, and we shall not carry it further.

The true friends of the Ottoman Empire, those who regard the prosperity of Egypt and the regeneration of Turkey as inseparable considerations, ought accordingly to persevere in maintaining those principles which gave rise to the negotiation of 1841. The allies of the generous Abdul Medjid have felt well enough that the work of deliverance would not be complete unless they enlightened the Sublime Porte as to the path to be followed in order to disengage the vital forces of the Empire from the deleterious elements which paralysed their efficiency. Under their advice, wise reforms are already on the eve of accomplishment, vast channels of communication are about to allow that activity which gives life to commerce and agriculture

to penetrate into the interior of the Empire, and foreign capital will be brought to bear on the development of the riches of the soil. Egypt has had the glory of taking the initiative in this movement. For more than a quarter of a century the broadest religious tolerance has marked the dealings of the Egyptian Government; and long before equality of rights was enunciated in the Legislature of the mother country, Christians in Egypt were elevated to the same grade, and shared the same honours as Mussulmans.

If we pass from the question of principle to the consideration of persons, it can be easily shown that the interests of Turkey, bound up with those of Egypt, are in no way put into jeopardy by the administration of the present Viceroy, a prince who, repudiating the traditions bequeathed by his predecessors, has spontaneously renounced becoming the first agriculturist or the first merchant of Egypt, who has swept away all the obstructive influences to the freedom of commercial transactions, and who, on the day after his accession, ordered the completion of the railway from Alexandria to the Red Sea, at the same time that he formed the resolution of throwing open to the world the most important of channels of communication by cutting through the Isthmus of Suez.

FERD. DE LESSEPS.

August 25th, 1856.

FINIS.

RITIME CANAL.



OF EL GUIR AND CANAL OF NECHOS
T OF LAKE TIMSAH
OF SERAPEUM
RANCE OF THE ANCIENT CANAL
TER LAKES (NOW DRY)



